Serfojee Rajah 1829

THE

REMINISCENCES

OF

THOMAS DIBDIN,

OF THE

THEATRES ROYAL,

COVENT-GARDEN, DRURY-LANE, HAYMARKET, &c.

AND AUTHOR OF THE CABINET, &c.

122

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1827.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.
122

TO

CHARLES DIBDIN,

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHER'S BROTHER

AND FELLOW-LABOURER

IN THE DRAMATIC VINEYARD,

THIS VOLUME

IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.
A27.
122

CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAP. I.—II.

"Llewellyn"—"High-mettled Racer"—New Drury-Lane Theatre—Unexpected summons to town—Engage at Drury-Lane for three years as prompter—"Metrical History of England"—"Harlequin and Humpo"—"Schniederkins"—Mrs. Siddons—Mrs. Jordan—Mr. Whitbread—Difficult situation of prompter—Second campaign at Drury—Stephen Kemble—Russell-street antiquities—Mr. Grignion—"Who's to Have Her?"—The author's troubles—"Orange Boven"—Mr. Larpent the licenser—"The Two Farmers"—"Harlequin Harper"—Mr. Kean . . . . page 1

CHAP. III.

Second campaign at Drury-Lane continued—Mr. Kean—Mrs. Garrick—Mr. Cooke—"Harlequin Hoax"—Deaths of my daughter and my father—Third campaign at Drury—Lamented death of my dear mother—Mark Lonsdale again—His death—Brief particulars of him—"The Ninth Statue".—An Irish speech in it read in full court by Lord Chancellor Eldon—"Past Ten o'Clock"—Mr. Bannister retires—

Death of Mr. Whitbread—A hint of something to come—Marriage of Miss Mellon—Mrs. Coutts raises the price of gallery tickets—Bob Palmer, and the Silver Greyhound 27

CHAP. IV.

Change in the ministry at Drury-Lane—My fourth campaign—Am appointed manager jointly with Mr. Rae—The sub-committee—Earl of Essex—Lord Byron—Honourable Douglas Kinnaird—Honourable G. Lamb—Peter Moore, Esq. M.P.—Difficulties and pleasures—Hard work in the holydays—Night trip to Tunbridge-Wells—"Maid and Magpie"—Failure of "Twenty per Cent"—Good-humour of Lord Essex—Success of "Beggar's Bush," and "The Poet's Last Shilling"—Mr. Bannister—Jack Litchfield—Mr. Wroughton—Stage manager's appointments—Mr. Sheridan and his son 51

CHAP. V.

Incidents—Grand night rehearsal of an opera we were not going to perform—"Accusation" at both theatres, and acquittal at Drury-Lane—Attempt to assassinate Miss Kelly—"What Next?"—"Pitcairn's Island"—Notice of my re-engagement with Mr. Rae as manager for the ensuing season—Surrey Theatre—A good bargain, and a bad one—Death of my friend Ben Thompson—Unexpected resolution of the sub-committee—Friendly letters from each of the sub-committee after my quitting Drury-Lane—Valedictory stanzas 86

CHAP. VI.

Retrospection of Mrs. Garrick—Importunities of Mr. West to induce me to take his theatre—Reasons why I

should not have taken it, and reasons why I did not know those reasons—Waterloo-bridge—Counteraction of its expected benefit to my theatre by the sudden and literal intervention of another—Rent—Inordinate price of insurance—Extraordinary expense of nearly rebuilding the interior of the theatre—Liberality of my landlord—The theatre—Performers—Artists—Comic applications—Mr. Kean—Mr. Incledon—Mrs. Billington—Madame Storace—Her sudden indisposition, and lamented dissolution . . . 107

CHAP. VII.

More of my offspring—"Peasant's Picnic"—"Sicilian"—"Chevy Chace"—"Who 's the Murderer?"—"Slaves in Barbary"—Death of Mrs. C. Dibdin—Production of "Harlequin in the Obelisk"—"Waggery in Wapping"—"Three times Three"—"Pedlar's Acre"—"Love, Hatred, and Revenge"—"Silver Swan"—"Magic Grape"—"Italian Wife"—"Red Man and Savage"—"5, 6, 7"—"Trick for Trick"—"Three Paddies"—"Don Giovanni"—"Constantine and Valeria"—Visit from Talma—Bring out "The Fatal Island"—"Waterloo Bridge"—"Harlequin Patchwork"—"Vicar of Wakefield"—"At all in the Ring"—"Zuma"—Mr. Harris—"Christmas Tale"—"Touchstone"—"Knights of the Lion"—"Tom Jones"—"Zapolya"—"Sir Launcelot Greaves"—"Duke and Devil"—"Khouli Khan"—"Rather too bad"—"How to write an Opera"—"Humphrey Clinker"—"Roderick Random"—"Ferdinand Count Fathom"—"Red Riding-hood"—"Invisible Witness"—O. Smith's "Lolonois"—"Sea-Serpent"—"Lucretia"—"Murder'd Guest"—Honourable testimonials—"Azim"—"Scraps"—"Reprobate"—"The Heart of Mid Lothian" 131

CHAP. VIII.

"The Ruffian Boy"—"Douglas"—Sir William Rawlins—Mr. Cordy—Bury my aunt—Re-open the Surrey—Miss Copeland—"Harlequin Picnic"—"Hermit of Mount Pausilippo"—"The Unknown"—"Florence Macarthy"—"Siege of Troy"—"Montrose"—"Bride of Lammermore"—"Abbot of San Martino"—"Scanderbeg"—"President and Peasant's Daughter"—"Mousetraps"—"Small Profits"—"Force of Conscience"—"Giant Spectre"—"Ivanhoe"—Deaths of the Duke of Kent and His late Majesty—And of Brother Cecil—Retrospect of Raymond's funeral—"Fate of Calas"—"Widow and No Widow"—"Knight of Rhodes"—"Old Mortality"—"Edda"—"Wheels within Wheels"—"Orsino"—"Stop Thief"—Death of Mr. Harris—"Everybody's Cousin"—"Belisarius"—"Peggy Larkins"—"Family Punch-bowl"—"Toss'd in a Blanket"—"Kenilworth"—"Blue Baron"—"Fifty Marriages and Nine-and-forty Murders"—"Alonzo and Imogine" in a new form—"Rise and Fall"—Rein-deer not immortal—"Laplanders" frost-nipped 169

CHAP. IX.

I re-open the Surrey at Easter—"The Two Gregories"—Lord Byron's "Marino Faliero"—Notice of Chancery injunction—Mr. Murray—"Seven Champions"—"Mysterious Mother"—"Masonry"—"Hag of Poland"—"Frederick and Voltaire"—Her Majesty Queen Caroline visits the Surrey—Theatre thrown open to the public by His Majesty's command on the day of the Coronation—Closed on account of the Queen's death—Re-opens—"The Three Harlequins"—"Veterans"—"Duke's Bride"—Changes in the *corps dramatique*—Competitions with the Cobourg—"Jack in the Green"—"Man and the Monkey"—"The Pirate"—"Sir

Arthur"—Relinquish the theatre to Mr. Watkyns Burroughs —New " Tom and Jerry"—Proposals from Mr. Morris, of the Haymarket—Serious and much-to-be-regretted event—Great and wilfully exaggerated misrepresentations respecting it—Its inefficiency and ill consequences 198

CHAP. X.

Preparations for opening my first campaign at the Haymarket—" Bill of Fare"—" Love Letters"—" Abyssinia" —Mr. Elliston and Drury-Lane—" Morning, Noon, and Night"—Erskine on " The Laplanders"—Emery's funeral—Produce new opera—Speech on closing the theatre—A very private box—*Little* matters—Commence my fifth campaign at Drury-Lane—Earl of Essex—Gigantic fall of " Gog and Magog"—" Reasons and causes, look you"—My trial before the privy council of Vinegar-yard—" Chinese Sorcerer"—My benefit—Liberality of principal performers—Temporary adieu to Drury-Lane—Mr. Kean 233

CHAP. XI.

Second campaign at the Haymarket—Pieces written and refused—" Summer Flies"—" Vicar of Wakefield"—Old friends from Scotland—Hits and misses—The Snow-storm —Close of the campaign—Princesses and performers—Remunerations and receipts—Mr. Dunn and Mr. Elliston—My abrupt dismissal from Drury-Lane—War declared, and legal hostilities commenced—Henry Cooper—Proposals of arbitration—" The law's delay, and insolence of office"—Visited by Mr. Morris, and why—A guinea to a shilling—Master nonsuited—" Saint Ronan's Well"—" India Pickle"—Mr. Botte—" Come if you Can"—Inauspicious commencement of my third Haymarket campaign—A tiresome chapter concluded by a still more tiresome but necessary digression 261

CHAP. XII.

Sickness—Pleasure of making apologies to an operatic audience — Confinement — Correspondence — Calumny — A very great man—Letter from a prime minister—Delays and delights of litigation — "Kenilworth"—Newspaper correspondence 286

CHAP. XIII.

Death of my friend Henry Cooper—Erskine and "The Laplanders" again—Mr. C. Kemble and Covent-Garden—Mr. Cundee and the Pantheon—Mr. Hawes, Mr. Welsh, and the Argyle Rooms—State of music in Italy—Mr. Erskine, Mr. Honeyman, and the Surrey Theatre—Mr. Jones and Sadler's Wells—Brother Charles and I change situations—First campaign of my Second Series at Sadler's Wells—"Here we Are"—"Great Gentleman in the Little Parlour"—"Beauty in a Box"—"Man and Marquis"—"Fairy Red and Fairy Blue"—"Jacko"—"Abyssinia"—"Faustus"—"The Lawyer, the Jew, and the Yorkshireman"—"Winki the Witch"—"Garrick and his Double"—Revivals—Second Campaign, or Winter Season—"All in One Night"—"Merlin's Mount" — Mr. Honeyman — Arbitration—Verdict against the Haymarket . . 306

CHAP. XIV.

Mr. Kemble's definition of true independence — Easter campaign at Sadler's Wells — "Mrs. Double U"—"Emmiline of Hungary"—"Hot and Cold, or Harlequin Snow-Ball"—"Peacock's Feather"—"Love in Full Gallop"—Pony Races—Revivals—"All a Fetch"—Death of Mr. Jones and Lord Chichester—Actors' interpolations—Summary of all my dramatic attempts at all the theatres—Dedicatory inscriptions—Unfinished works—Mr. Kemble again

—Garden and gallery of theatrical portraits at Belmont—Termini not Caryatides—Amateur author's opera—Dr. Hoadley Ashe—Sir Richard Hoare—Epitaph in Stourton church-yard 330

CHAP. XV.

Symptoms of separation à la Fielding—Death of Mr. Connor—And of Michael Kelly—Tales of terror—Disputations with Madame Bolla—Hair-breadth 'scape of Henry Johnston—Messrs. Kemble, Cooke, Kelly, and Incledon, in the character of Harlequin—Attempt at Kelly's epitaph—Mr. Whitbread's private theatricals—Rev. Mr. Plumptre, at once a zealous reformer and liberal defender of theatricals—Death of Talma—Fatalities—The Lottery—Increase of London amusements—Private theatres—Autobiographical road-book—Running to seed—Lamented loss to the Drama—Concluding lines to the Bard of Poor Jack . . . 369

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS DIBDIN.

CHAP. I.

1812—1813—1814.

"And, lo! a second phœnix from the flame!"

"Llewellyn"—"High-mettled Racer"—New Drury-Lane Theatre—Unexpected summons to town—Engage at Drury-Lane for three years as prompter—"Metrical History of England"—Harlequin and Humpo"—"Schniederkins"—Mrs. Siddons—Mrs. Jordan—Mr. Whitbread—Difficult situation of prompter—Second campaign at Drury—Stephen Kemble—Russell-street antiquities—Mr. Grignion—"Who's to Have Her?"—The author's troubles—"Orange Boven"—Mr. Larpent the licenser—"The Two Farmers"—"Harlequin Harper"—Mr. Kean.

In the commencement of 1812 Mr. Cherry, of Drury-Lane Theatre, agreed with Mr. Elliston

for a certain sum to write a three-act drama for the Surrey Theatre, which was to be called "Llewellyn Prince of Wales;" but the author dying at the end of the first act, Mr. Elliston asked on what terms I would finish the piece for the benefit of the widow: my terms were—the pleasure of presenting her (which I did in a few days) with the remaining two acts. Mr. Elliston paid her the stipulated £50, and was rewarded by the complete success of the production. I believe it was about this time I wrote for Messrs. Davis and Parker, of the Amphitheatre Royal, a pantomime on the subject of my father's excellent song of the "High-mettled Racer," by the unprecedented run of which they acknowledged to having gained considerably more than ten thousand pounds. I received £50, and I think £25 for an equestrian spectacle founded on a story in the first voyage of Columbus, which has not yet appeared.

A few weeks prior to the finishing New Drury-Lane Theatre, while I was at Betchworth, I received a request from Mr. Arnold to meet him at his house in Golden-square without loss of time. I first called at the Surrey Theatre, where I found Messrs. Elliston, Dowton, Russell, Mrs. Edwin, and Miss F. M. Kelly (great names for a minor establishment!) rehearsing

"Lionel and Clarissa." On mentioning my errand to town, Mr. Dowton informed me why I was sent for; his intelligence was corroborated by several others; and when I breakfasted next morning with Mr. Arnold, that gentleman was much astonished to find me already in possession of his intended proposal, and the exact terms on which he meant to make it, as he had only confided them to one person. Our business was however soon arranged: Mr. Arnold had proposed me to the Drury-Lane proprietors as prompter, on an annual salary of £520, for which I was also to produce a comic pantomime yearly, and a one-act piece on any public national event which might take place, as in the instance of "Orange Boven." I was additionally indulged with a day or two in which to consult my friends, as accepting the situation of prompter appeared to be losing professional rank; those friends were my wife, my mother, and Mr. Harris: the two former joined in opinion with me that I ought to accept it immediately; and to the latter (for whom I was then writing a farce) I sent a letter reporting progress, and asking his assent to my offered engagement. To write to my old patron, was always to be sure of a kind reply; and what he sent in this case is a pleasing proof,

that while I was to be employed at one theatre, such employ would by no means injure my interests at another :—

Belmont, August 3d, 1812.

"Dear Dibdin,

"I have been rather impatient for the farce, and am glad I am to have it next week. I congratulate you very sincerely on the appointment offered you so handsomely at Drury-Lane, and that you will no longer have to depend *altogether* on the (at best) precarious produce of your pen. I think you have very prudently and properly drawn a line of distinction between your literary and your managerial efforts. You will always find me ready and desirous of giving every assistance and protection to any work of yours, to the best of my ability; but I am clearly of opinion, that in no instance it would be advisable for you to stand forth as the avowed author; therefore your attendance at rehearsals would be out of the question. Best compliments to Mrs. Dibdin.

"Ever truly yours,

"T. Harris."

With the general approbation of my friends,

then, I finally accepted this new post; stipulating, however, that should I, at my leisure hours, (and Heaven knows they were to be but few!) write any thing to Mr. Harris's taste, it should be acted at Covent-Garden. I had finished my "Metrical History," nearly all of which, for want of other time, while I was managing the Surrey Theatre, was written after twelve o'clock each night; (observe, ladies and gentlemen! my wife was at this time confined by indisposition in the country;) and after a long and fagging evening in the theatre, rehearsals all day, and much dramatic writing in the intervals, I really enjoyed a solitary hour or two of scribbling my bit of history, unconnected with the fears of what actors would say to this or that part, or audiences to the thing itself.

Mr. Elliston one night caught me at this lamp-light exercise; and on hearing me read a page or two of the work, told me he was opening a bookseller's establishment at Bristol on his own account, and would give £200 for my copy-right. I instantly agreed: a well-known city gentleman, within ten days, offered me £400 for it. I asked Mr. Elliston to quit his bargain, offered a consideration, and at length fairly explained; but he was not inclined to relinquish his purchase: he did not publish it himself, but, I believe, gave Longman and Co. one

fourth; and the copy-right, having since, by the lapse of fourteen years, reverted to me,—it is my intention to bring it down to the present period, and republish it. It was meant principally as a school-book, and should have been sent into the world in one volume at eight or ten shillings; but being printed in two, charged at 18*s*. it was shut out of its destined circle: I believe it is now very scarce. The Rev. Mr. Prince, chaplain of the Magdalen, was so pleased with a little poem in it, historical of the institution of that excellent charity, that he begged permission to have five hundred copies printed for the use of subscribers, &c. at the anniversary dinner. The reviewers of the day, who had hitherto not been too favourable to my dramatic attempts, generally spoke in flattering terms of this book; concluding (though in other words) with the very kind compliment, that "they did not think Mr. T. Dibdin had been adequate to such a production."

As I saw before me a season of severe confinement at New Drury, I went, in order to lay in a stock of health, with my wife and son, on a fortnight's visit into Kent; saw many of our old patrons and connexions; returned a few days before the new house opened, took part of a house in Southampton-street, and commenced business *con amore*.

The theatre opened on the 10th of October, 1812, under happier auspices than the New Covent-Garden had done: Mr. Elliston recited Lord Byron's prize address on the occasion; and for several nights after, the audience were annoyed by unsuccessful candidates, who disputed the judgment of the Committee appointed to select the address from the immense number offered; and one gentleman, who came on the stage, and insisted on reciting his rejected offspring, was only restrained from doing so by being taken into custody. I produced a pantomime at Drury-Lane, which proved a very fortunate speculation, bearing the name of "Harlequin and Humpo, or Colombine by Candlelight." The night previous to its representation brought me an anonymous letter, stating that three hundred humpy men from the neighbourhood of the Temple had determined on opposing the piece. As there was no ridicule of deformed folks in the pantomime, I had no apprehensions of those whose backs were so awfully *up*, and had the pleasure to see the curtain fall unaccompanied by a single token of disapprobation; and the pantomime was acted forty-eight nights, which is more than I can say of a farce I produced at Covent-Garden under the title of "Schniederkins," which was soon withdrawn.

Mr. Rae, afterwards my fellow-manager, made his first appearance at New Drury this season as Hamlet; and Miss Smith, now Mrs. Bartley, as Isabella. Our dramatic novelties were not very fortunate. Mr. Coleridge's tragedy of "Remorse;" and "The Russian," a melo-drame by Mr. T. Sheridan; and a farce from the French, by Mr. Poole, called "A Hole in the Wall," comprised all, except my harlequinade, that produced any effect. The "Assignation," "Absent Apothecary," "Recrimination," and "Lose no Time," went the way of my own poor dear "Mr Schniederkins" at Covent-Garden. My play of "the Birth-day" was several times very successfully acted, through the powerful aid of Messrs. Bannister and Dowton; and Mr. Bannister, at his benefit, delivered selections from his Budget, part of which I had written for him, with great applause. Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Jordan both acted on one night, towards the close of the season, for the benefit of the Drury-Lane Theatrical Fund. I have never seen either lady since. The first time I saw Mrs. Siddons as my mamma, by virtue of the heathen mythology, on the boards of Old Drury, is as vivid in my recollection as my last time of seeing her in Lady Randolph; and though I may never have the pleasure of seeing her again, I hope

it will be many years before I can assuredly say, as of the sister Muse who acted with her that night,—She *was*.

The Drury-Lane Theatrical Fund, through the zeal of the two great actresses whom I have named, and all concerned, had a great benefit; as the British prisoners of war in France had also. On the last evening of the season, the new prompter of Drury-Lane had no reason to complain of his own benefit night; and that nothing might be wanting to complete my comforts *pro tempore*, my wife presented me with a pretty little girl.

Notwithstanding all these desirable matters, there were points in my situation which rendered it any thing but enviable: I still however had the welfare of my mother, sister, and several other relatives, as well as that of my wife and my two children, to think of; and I, who had been used to the confidential, liberal, and fatherly government of emperor Harris; the friendship and brotherly regard of viceroy Lewis; not forgetting the truly royal administration of king Colman, before he had partners;—had now to see, hear, and feel a very considerable difference in all that related to my situation. A prompter's appointment is never a complete sinecure, or rather it is always one of the extremest points that can be imagined as to distance from such a situation: he

has to do his duty to the public, and, if he can, to please managers and actors; the first is a very difficult matter to do, the latter impossible, if the said prompter be a man of probity. Now I had two managers to please, who seldom pleased each other; and as I could never please more than one at a time, I had hard work (as Alderman Swain, at the beginning of this elaborate work, advised respecting Squire Cecil) to "carry my dish even;" and if I accomplished this, there was a higher power, and a still more difficult one to please, in the chief man of the ruling committee; the head manager being king, and the said gentleman "viceroy over him." I accuse none of these gentlemen of wilful arbitrary habits of contradiction any more than I shall hereafter accuse the succeeding sub-committee; their intentions were all good; but never were bachelors' wives, or maids' children governed by more contradictory systems of management than those which were *designed* at Drury-Lane Theatre; for, to have *executed* most of them would have been impossible; and for so insignificant a person as a prompter (who is as important however in his place as the main-spring of a watch) to have set up any system of his own in opposition to so many militating against each other, would have been high treason in "the state of Denmark."

I have, on a severe winter's day, been on Drury-Lane stage, with one play-book after another in my benumbed fingers, from ten in the morning till near five in the afternoon; and afterwards, while enjoying the comforts of a good fire, and comfortable though hasty dinner with my family till six, I have received a verbal message that the head of the sub-committee had just called at the theatre, and not finding the acting-manager, treasurer, or box book-keeper there, had left word "it was very hard the prompter at least could not be found at his post, and begged Mr. T. Dibdin might be told as much:" and when Mr. T. Dibdin *was* told as much, he thought it much more than he ought to have been told: he never, when himself a manager, required slavish obedience from any one; wished always to be easily approached without being imposed on; and while he was a subject in these realms of patent royalty, never failed in due respect to his governors, but, on the other hand, he never kissed their infallible slippers: had he done so, he might have been a Theatre-Royal placeman to this hour.

A circumstance occurred one day, on the eve of which I received another verbal message, of the kind to which I have alluded, from the fount of authority, which I shall mention. The morn-

ing was intensely cold; the actors and actresses, up to the chin in surtouts and pelisses, by briskly treading the stage, could now and then keep themselves from being frozen to its boards; but it is the prompter's positive duty to stand still and steady on his post. The only instance of attention to my comforts I ever received, was when a gentleman in office begged, on the occasion I refer to, that I would allow him to hold the book while I retired to my room, and expelled some of the effects of the frost from my fingers. I availed myself of this permission, for such it was; and returning to my place in a quarter of an hour, was told Mr. Whitbread had asked for me: I naturally, however, supposed that he who sent me away must have told the director as much, and thought no more of it; till, by way of *sauce piquante* to my dinner, I received, by one of the house messengers, another half-angry communication, to which I wrote a reply and remonstrance. This produced the following answer:—

"Dear Sir,

"I received your letter through Mr. Ward yesterday, and Mr. Arnold did communicate the contents to me of the one you wrote him on the same subject. It has happened two or

three times I have found it convenient to call at the theatre, when I had not the pleasure to find you; and in a communication with Mr. Arnold, I believe I put down the words 'never present,' which certainly was not intended by me to bear the literal meaning which you have put upon it, and which has therefore given you, unnecessarily, so much uneasiness; quite aware your absence might be satisfactorily explained, and not intending to convey any imputation upon you. Your illness, and, above all, your family affliction,* I have sincerely lamented; and if you reflect, I am sure you will not, for a moment, conceive that I could have expected a discharge of your duties during your sickness, or that I would permit them to intrude upon your grief. You have now before you the whole state of the case, and I think you will perceive there is no ground for the offence you appear to have taken: I am sure there was not any intended by me. I feel it necessary to make observations on every commission and omission I perceive at the theatre, or any thing that bears the appearance of either; and I always receive satisfactory explanations with pleasure.

"I am, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

"SAMUEL WHITBREAD."

Dover-street, May 20th, 1814.

* The recent death of my daughter.

This very gentlemanly letter was consolatory in the extreme. It will be seen that I have anticipated dates in here introducing it; but as it is connected with the subject on which I was writing, it is as well here as in a future chapter.

With respect to the difficulty a prompter has to encounter in attempting to give general satisfaction to a company of performers, it requires but few words to evince the impracticability of a

Consummation so devoutly to be wished:

Should an actor be imperfect in his part, let the prompter be as watchful as Argus, or as diligent as Industry personified, "he shall not escape censure" from the person who is imperfect, and who is, of course, ever anxious to avert blame from himself by transferring it to the prompter. He is also the officer appointed to return the names of those who, for absence, negligence, or misconduct, have violated the rules of the theatre, and incurred fines; and, in the course of thirty-five years experience, I never knew any prompter, from the great and whimsical Jemmy Wild, down to myself,—

(" Can't go lower, you know!"—Reynolds, in *Dramatist*.)

who could inflict a fine so as to give satisfaction to the party incurring it.

Again, whenever a part is given out for study,

which the performer thinks either beneath or unsuited to his or her abilities,—all the resentment felt on the occasion is uttered in presence of the prompter (who must never be a tell-tale) on the managers and proprietors; while, on the other hand, those higher powers are extremely angry when the prompter neglects to enforce obedience to the rules of the house, or excuses any member of the theatre from his or her duties: he has the same troubles to encounter, in a minor degree, with painters, mechanists, wardrobe-keepers, and band; and, in fact, has all the arduous tasks of stage management to perform without being entitled to the credit or profits of any of them.

Come we now to the re-opening of Drury-Lane in 1813, and the commencement of my second season. We began on the 11th of September, and on the 27th Mr. Stephen Kemble made his appearance in Falstaff. Mr. Raymond, who lived in Chester-street, Grosvenor-place, observed to me that Mr. Stephen Kemble being alone in town, ought to be invited to take an oyster, after performing, by some of the establishment, and regretted that the distance at which he (Mr. Raymond) resided from the theatre made it impossible for him to do the honours: he accordingly begged I would be his substitute.

In consequence, I had the honour of Mr. S. Kemble's company several evenings to supper, and once or twice to dinner, during the twelve nights he played at Drury, in my new apartments in Great Russell-street. Mr. S. Kemble gave me a warm invitation to the North, but I was always too much occupied to avail myself of it: and the night before he left town, he gave an oyster, and a pleasant evening at a house in Bow-street to Mr. John Taylor (then of the Sun newspaper), Mr. Raymond, and myself. I once since had the pleasure of dining with Mr. S. Kemble at the house of Mr. Francis, in Long-Acre: I then was lessee of the Surrey Theatre; and Mr. Kemble proposed to engage with me, and speak an address nightly in the character of Falstaff: we could not, however, come to an agreement. The last time I saw him was when he was manager of Drury-Lane, when he expressed very kind remembrance of our Russell-street *petits soupers*, and told me, what to the London antiquarian may convey some interest, *viz.* that the scene of those suppers was formerly the celebrated Button's Coffee-house of *Spectator* memory. A very worthy and *recherché* literary gentleman, now no more, who lived next door but one to me, and who will be recognised by many when I mention the name of

Grignion, (brother to the well-known engraver of old)—took great pains to impress me with respect for my new habitation, which he considered as standing on demi-classic ground, and (justly proud of having perfected himself in the ancient and modern topography of the parish) obliged me one day with the subjoined rather curious letter, accompanied by an etched engraving illustrative of his descriptions, and containing also the *fac-simile* of an order for two to the boxes in the hand-writing of Mr. Rich, the prince of Harlequins (by the name of Lunn), and the same manager of Covent-Garden who had to contend with such a competitor and actor as Garrick at the rival house :—

"Dear Sir,

"If you inspect the curious ichnography herewith sent, you will see the exact spots where those three celebrated coffee-houses stood in this street, viz.—the house you inhabit was the residence of Miles Prance, the queen's goldsmith, on whose evidence, Green, Berry, and Hill, who murdered Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, were convicted and executed. I remember a very beautiful chapel on the ground-plan of your back yard, evidently built by Inigo Jones for the Roman Catholic worship of Prance's

family: the house was afterwards occupied by an eminent Roman Catholic banker, named Jernigan, who used that chapel: Government gave him a lottery for plate and other curiosities which he had taken in pledge from the nobility and gentry, which lottery was drawn in your house: the highest prize was a large silver cistern most curiously chased and embossed; it was won by the Queen of Portugal: the lowest prize, a silver medal, with devices in honour of George the Second and Queen Caroline, one of which I have. The house was afterwards occupied by an eminent Roman Catholic woollen-draper of the name of Tancred, who was very opulent, and kept a chair for his wife, which caused your entrance passage to be made so wide.

"You will see, sir, by my plan of 1691, that Convent-Garden was then the emporium of the arts and sciences, and the residence of the chief nobility of the kingdom. My late dear grandfather's cordial friend, the celebrated Barton Booth, lived in Charles-street, No. 4; Colley Cibber lived in No. 3; and Easty's hotel was Mr. Garrick's: Mrs. Oldfield lived in Southampton-street; Wilkes built the house in Bow-street, next door but one to the theatre; Garrick and Macklin lodged in it. I thought this infor-

mation respecting our truly classic ground might not be uninteresting to you, and am, dear sir, truly yours,

"THOS. GRIGNION."

My friend Benjamin Thompson produced an operatic drama at Drury-Lane in October, called "Godolphin, or the Lion of the North:" "First Impressions," a comedy in five acts, I do not know by whom,[1] was acted nearly twenty nights. I was author of the succeeding novelty, a farce from the French, to which I gave the name of "Who's to Have her?" I had many troubles in the production of this trifle. Mr. Arnold, from indisposition, had gone to Bath; Mr. Raymond had not sufficient authority to assist me; and there was no appeal to any efficient power for protection. Mr. Whitbread was in a hurry for the farce; Mr. Phillips, the principal singer in the piece, had, during the rehearsals, permission to go to Bath; and while anxiously expecting his return, I received the following letter from my manager Mr. Arnold:—

Bath, Saturday, Nov. 13th, 1813.

"My dear Sir,

"I wish you not to lose a moment in preparing a double for Phillips in your farce

[1] By the author of *Rejected Addresses*.

against Thursday next, as I find him altogether dissatisfied with the part and the song he has received, and do not believe he will play it. (Comfort for an author!) Pyne I should think your mark. It is a very hard case both on you and on the theatre; but I advise you not to neglect, for a moment, to prepare a substitute, that the piece may not be delayed beyond Thursday. Mr. P. will be at rehearsal on Wednesday morning. I do not know when I shall return, but certainly not in time to witness your success on the first night.

"Yours, in the mean time, very truly,

"S. J. Arnold."

And Mr. Pyne *did* play the part; but observe, kind reader! how much I had to regret the want of support I had formerly received at Covent-Garden: here was a farce, for which I was not to receive one shilling if it should fail;—one hundred pounds should it succeed: but the characters were to be played, not as had been originally arranged, or by the persons for whom they were written; but at the will and pleasure of certain performers. As there was no other ostensible authority in town, I complained to Mr. Whitbread of the hardships of having to wait the pleasure of the principal singer till his

return to town on the Wednesday; and then, if he persisted in refusing the character, to have to beg as a boon of Mr. Pyne to get ready in the rejected part in *one* day. Mr. Whitbread's answer was, the farce *must* be done on the Thursday. I could have but one reply, which was that it was impossible. Mr. Whitbread wrote, in consequence,—

"Sir,

"I received your letter on my return home last night. I beg you to be persuaded that the expressions I used were meant only to convey my anxious desire that *that* should be done for the benefit of the theatre which I had been led to expect would certainly take place, and not from any perverse or obstinate feeling, on my part, to bring out any thing dangerously and prematurely. I am a very incompetent judge of the length of time necessary for preparation, and only name Thursday because I know it to have been Mr. Arnold's confident hope and expectation that the farce would be produced that very night; and I am sure it is very much wanted. I do not presume to give any direction; and I beg that my wishes may be put quite out of the question when they clash with the interests of the theatre or the author. You

and Mr. Raymond must act according to your own judgments.

"Of all the extraordinary things, or, at least, things which have struck me as extraordinary, since I have become conversant with the interior of a theatre, the *most* extraordinary has been, the refusal of performers to take parts offered them, of which we have now a signal instance in the case of Mr. Phillips. I do not understand how salaries can be paid, if performers will not co-operate to render pieces attractive. Wishing you and the theatre every possible success, and desiring by no means to interfere, I am, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"S. WHITBREAD."

Dover-street, November 17, 1813.

"Pray show this to Mr. Raymond."

The farce, produced five days after, luckily succeeded: I received one hundred pounds from the theatre, and forty pounds from my old publisher Barker for my copy-right. A grand oriental spectacle in three acts, which was alternately by report given to Mr. Thomas Sheridan, Lord Byron, and half a hundred other authors, but which was really Mr. Arnold's,—next made its appearance with most splendid appointments of

all sorts, and received unqualified approbation, under the title of "Illusion."

The sudden and unexpected arrival of deputies from Holland, inviting this country to assist in driving Bonaparte's connexions from the Netherlands, occasioned an extraordinary sensation in London, and I was called on by the management of the theatre, at the spur of the moment, to produce something applicable to the patriotic occasion, which I did under the appellation of "Orange Boven." On the very day, and late in that day, when it was to have been forthcoming;—when the bills were printed, the boxes taken, and, as Johnny O'Keeffe says, in Wild Oats, "candles booked, and fiddlers engaged,"—down came Mr. Larpent, the deputy licenser, with a veto, because there were two or three songs which were thought too personal against Bonaparte. In consequence of this unexampled circumstance, the following hand-bill was immediately circulated:—

"*Theatre Royal Drury-Lane.*

"Wednesday, December 8th, 1813.

"The public are most respectfully informed that Mr. Larpent, the reader of plays appointed by the licenser, has, within the last five hours, in the name of the Lord Chamberlain, prohibited

the performance of the loyal and patriotic effusion of "ORANGE BOVEN," announced for representation this evening, on no other plea, than that he had not had sufficient time to consider it. This piece, in one act, was sent to Mr. Larpent's office on Saturday last. Under this extraordinary and unlooked-for impediment, it is respectfully hoped the public will pardon the disappointment which this postponement unavoidably occasions."

Under the next night's play-bill was advertised—

"The public are respectfully informed that due notice will be given when official permission shall be obtained of the performance of "ORANGE BOVEN, or More Good News."

It appeared on the 10th, ushered by an address spoken by Mrs. Edwin, and was hailed with applause throughout. I published the interdicted songs in the books sold in the theatre. The words in which Mr. Arnold chose publicly to express the reception of this piece, were,—"it met with the most unequivocal, unbounded, unanimous approbation, and was announced for a second representation without a single dissentient voice."

I omitted, in my memoir of my second year at

Covent-Garden, to state, that I wrote, in a season of monopoly and much artificial scarcity, a farce which I named "The Two Farmers," and which Mr. Harris highly approved, and accepted: poor John Moorhead composed the music, and the piece was put into rehearsal. Messrs. Munden and Emery were the "Two Farmers;" one a narrow, and the other a liberal-minded fellow: the former was named Mr. Locust. When this farce was nearly finished, the licenser stopped its further progress, and, at the desire of Mr. Harris, I waited on him in Bedford-street, Bedford-square, to inquire what were his objections to it. Mr. Larpent would hardly deign to listen to a word I had to say; and told me, that if the farce were to be acted, no respectable farmer would be able to pass through the streets lest people should cry out, "There goes an old Locust!" I humbly submitted to the great man that it would not be to *respectable* farmers such an epithet could, by any chance, be applied; but he turned a deaf ear to all I could say; and the hundred pounds I had agreed for, and calculated on receiving, for successful ridicule of monopoly, were lost by the sensitive apprehensions of Mr. Larpent. On another occasion, the run of my opera of "Il Bondocani" was stopped in its career on the 33d night,

because, being just at the period of Mr. Pitt's quitting office, there happened to be a line in a song sung by Mr. Fawcett, which said,—

> When fairly kick'd out, I but call it resigning ;

which said line had been written (as the reader may remember) five years before the opera was acted.

At Christmas, my pantomime of "Harlequin Harper, or a Jump from Japan," was well received, and repeated often through the season : "Narensky," a serio-comic opera, (said to be Mr. T. Sheridan's) was next performed ; and on Wednesday, January 26th, 1814, Mr. Kean made his *début* in the character of Shylock.

SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S S... MAHAL, TANJORE

CHAP. III.

1814—1815.

What further hath befallen, or may befal,
I by and by may tell you, if at all.—*Don Juan.*

Second campaign at Drury-Lane continued—Mr. Kean—Mrs. Garrick—Mr. Cooke—"Harlequin Hoax"—Deaths of my daughter and my father—Third campaign at Drury—Lamented death of my dear mother—Mark Lonsdale again—his death—Brief particulars of him—"The Ninth Statue"—An Irish speech in it read in full court by Lord Chancellor Eldon—"Past Ten o'Clock"—Mr. Bannister retires—Death of Mr. Whitbread—A hint of something to come—Marriage of Miss Mellon—Mrs. Coutts raises the price of gallery tickets—Bob Palmer, and the Silver Greyhound.

THE rapid progress of Mr. Kean in public estimation, and his unparalleled attraction, which quite restored the already drooping affairs of Drury-Lane, are so well known, that it would be unfair to fill up pages by any length of detail here. When Mr. Kean first played, it was to a thin house; and although the judicious few of that night highly approved his acting, but little

notice was taken of it either in or out of the theatre; and for a few days, scarcely any thing was said respecting him. A necessary, but unexpected change of play, on some occasion, caused the usual question,—"What shall we act?" from the stage-manager: I immediately advised a second appearance of the "new gentleman." Mr. Raymond said that was also Mr. Arnold's wish; and Mr. Kean played Shylock again on the first, third, and fifth of February. Remembering Cooke's success in Richard, I strongly recommended Mr. Kean's playing that part, and many voices were against it. On his first rehearsing the part of Shylock, so little interest seemed to be attached to the event of Mr. Kean's success, that, through one excuse or other sent by performers for non-attendance,[1] there were, in some scenes, only the new actor, and myself as prompter, on the stage. I apologised to Mr. Kean for this seeming neglect, which he appeared quite indifferent about; and was repaid for his philosophy by seeing his first rehearsal of Richard as fully attended as if it had been an evening's performance. He did not

[1] I once (among many other singular excuses from performers for non-attendance) received a letter from a lady, deeply deploring her inability to leave home, because she had "got such a head-ache as *never was!*"

at rehearsal speak so as to convey any very magnificent idea of what he meant to do; yet, as I had formerly seen in Cooke, there was a judicious something in his quietude that augured well. Mr. Wroughton, who was rehearsing King Henry, whispered me, "This gentleman 's an actor!" it would have been strange had he said the reverse. There were passages however in his (Mr. Kean's) reading, which did not at all accord with the ideas I had, from long observation, formed of them; and as a relative of the new performer had introduced him to me rather particularly, with a request that I would be very free and candid in my opinion of his rehearsing,—I took the liberty, when we were alone, of remarking to Mr. Kean what I observed: he had the politeness to acquiesce in what he termed the justice of my critique, and asked me, as a favour, to take his book home with me, and mark the passages I had mentioned, and as many others as I might deem necessary. I did so, and returned the book at night, with excuses for having been more copious in my recommendations than I had at first intended: he accepted them with every appearance of pleasure; and at the next rehearsal paid me the compliment of apparently adopting every suggestion; though I am now convinced that the errors I had ven-

tured to correct had been merely the effect of a careless indifference, with which he almost unconsciously rehearsed. It was at this time Mr. Kean reminded me of the merited compliment I had paid his acting at the Haymarket in "Five Miles Off."

It is rather a curious coincidence, that an actor, now no more, who at each of Mr. Kean's rehearsals of Richard hinted that the undertaking must fail, had, many years before, sat next me at Covent-Garden on the night of Cooke's *début*, and remarked the paucity of spectators. I replied, "The thinness of the house, on a first appearance, can be no criterion: wait till he plays the part again."—"And do you think he will be *suffered* to play it again?" was my friend's concluding question,—and a false conclusion it proved to be. Cooke played Richard 24, and Kean 25 nights during their respective first seasons.

In brief continuation of this subject, I have to state that some months after Mr. Kean's appearance, I received the following note from the lady, who, in the year 1775, had introduced me to Mrs. Siddons:—

"Mrs. Garrick's compliments to Mr. T. Dibdin, and, if convenient for him, will be glad

to see him to-morrow at the Adelphi, about twelve o'clock."

Adelphi, April 4th.

The old lady desired to see me relative to a benevolence she wished to be conveyed in a particular manner to a musical person. It was a very cold day when I waited on her in her late husband's library; a long room, from one end of which to the other Mrs. Garrick tripped like a girl of eighteen, before I could prevent her, to place a screen between me and a door-way. She still retained just so much of her foreign accent as was agreeable; and, first salutations over, the commission she wished me to undertake being arranged, refreshments offered and refused, the lady was pleased to say,—"Mr. Dipdin, I look upon you as a twick of the old school: your father was a great favourite with my husband, and I am glad you are in Drury-Lane: I go now and then to my box there, and am much pleased with your new actor Mr. Kean." —"He will be very proud to hear that, madam! it is a very general feeling, that Mr. Kean possesses considerable talent. I believe you also approved of my friend Mr. Cooke?"—"O yes, sir! great deal: I approved Mr. Cooke much; his King Richard was good, and sometimes very

fine, and put me in mind of Mr. Garrick; but Mr. Kean—it is like Mr. Garrick himself. Mr. Kean could never have seen Mr. Garrick, who was dead before your new actor was born: yet he not only speaks some speeches in the style of that *good* actor (marking the little adjective with most impressive emphasis, and looking up at a picture of Mr. Garrick over the fire-place), but he seems to me to choose the very same board to speak them on; and this, Mr. Diptin! is no small compliment to Mr. Kean, when the worth of my husband is still *tickling* (I presume for tingling) in my ears."

Mrs. Garrick observed much on the superior splendour of modern theatres when compared with those of *her* day; their larger expense in scenery, dresses, appointments, and number of actors. "We once," she added, "laid out two or three thousand pounds on a spectacle; ('The Chinese Festival,' I believe) but you do it, even in the small theatres, every year. You do more for the people now than we did, and they do less for you than they did for us." She concluded with remarking, that my father had, like myself, written for Sadler's Wells, and Drury-Lane, and Covent-Garden, and the Circus, but that he lost money by being manager: at the latter theatre, I wish I had followed her

advice,—"Don't you do so, Mr. Dipdin!" I did not forget to remind her that she was my godmother-in-law at least, for that her husband had been my *parrain*. "I know, I know, I don't forget," was her reply. When I was joint manager with Mr. Rae, *under* the *sub*-committee, I again waited on Mrs. Garrick to ask a loan of the manuscript of the "Shakspeare Jubilee," written by her husband, and composed by my father; which she would cheerfully have accommodated the theatre with, but it was at Hampton-Court and could not be got at. I then took my last leave of her.

"Rogues All," a farce; "The Woodman's Hut," by Mr. Arnold; and "Intrigue," by Mr. Poole, were all I recollect of novelty during the remainder of a season, which was principally supported by the amazing popularity and attraction of Mr. Kean, notwithstanding much of conflicting opinion on and off the stage. In the course of this winter I made an agreement with Messrs. Whittingham and Arliss, of Paternoster-Row, to become editor of what has since been called "Dibdin's London Theatre," which was to contain plays, &c. exactly copied and corrected from the genuine prompt-books of the three royal theatres, to all of which I had access. As I professed to give the original list

of actors in the old plays, I was often assisted by the kindness of Mr. John Kemble, who gave me access to his library, and frequently wrote me the casts himself, as thus:—

"My dear Sir,

"The women in Cato were originally Marcia, Mrs. Oldfield; Lucia, Mrs. Porter. I wish these characters were as well represented now-a-days. Thank you a thousand times for your obliging present (a book).

"Yours truly,

"J. P. Kemble."

November 11, 1814:
No. 89, Great Russell-street, Bloomsbury-square.

Forty or fifty numbers of this work were published: a dissolution of partnership discontinued it. I have this day (October the 10th) seen advertised the publication of a "Minor Theatre," with my name to it, of which I know nothing.

In August I produced, at the request of Mr. Arnold, a most successful burlesque at the English Opera House, called "Harlequin Hoax:" it was repeated till the end of the season. I was paid fifty pounds for it, and sold the copyright for five-and-thirty.

On the 29th of March we lost our only remaining daughter; and on the 29th of August,

accompanied by my brother Charles, Mr. John Taylor (of the Sun), and a medical gentleman,—I followed the remains of my father to the grave. It would not become me to say how much I think his talent was under-rated, especially by rival composers, during his life. A hall in one of our theatres was some time since inscribed with the names of eminent English composers, that of Charles Dibdin, the composer of "The Padlock," &c. &c. &c. &c. excepted. Shield and Incledon were the most enthusiastic admirers I ever knew of my father's productions, the fame of which will live while England has a ship, or a sailor to man it.

Through the kind and unremitting zeal of that most amiable and benevolent friend, the late Mr. John Young, of the British Institution, a large subscription was procured, and several highly respectable public meetings held (Admiral Sir Joseph Yorke presided at the last), for the purpose of erecting a monument to the memory of our national lyrist; but what arrangements have been made since Mr. Young's lamented death, or when the subscribers are to be informed of the destination of their liberality, or to whose care the funds are entrusted,—my brother and self, as well as our personal friends, remain equally uninformed.

My third campaign at Drury commenced on the 20th September, 1814. The theatre was altered, re-embellished, a new proscenium, with stage-doors, and several private boxes, added, at the expense of nearly fourteen thousand pounds. On the 10th of October I had the misfortune to lose my dear mother: she had suffered much from very protracted and severe illness; and as long as she retained recollection, seemed affectionately sensible of the attentions of her children, all of whom, to the last, surrounded her bed: her last words, before she lost her faculties, (with her last kiss) to me, were —"We shall meet again in heaven!"

It was very shortly after this I followed my friend Lonsdale to his last habitation: he was my first London manager, and I think the reader will have seen he was a man of some mind. I do not want to fill up my book with episodes; but I have always thought there is more profitable food for the mind in marking the matter-of-fact progress of men of any pretension to talent, than in all the fascinating pictures of imagination for which our best romance-writers can draw on their resources.

Mark Lonsdale was bred a designer for calico-printing at Carlisle, and when very young, wrote for provincial journals and monthly country

magazines: he came to London with a letter of recommendation to the Duke of Norfolk, by whose interest he brought out at Drury-Lane Theatre a farce, written in the unsophisticated style of a country lad, called "The Spanish Rivals," which I have before mentioned. The following, the original of which he gave me, is the first letter he wrote to his Northumberland friends on his arrival in the great metropolis, and is, I think, a very natural Joseph Andrews sort of an effusion:—

London, January 13th, 1780.

"Dear friends,

"This night, about half an hour ago, I had the pleasure of reading a letter from Carlisle, and now, agreeable to desire, I set down to answer it, though I shall not burden my paper with much real business. It is the season of amusement, and if I can hit upon any thing of the harmless and diverting kind to present you with, let business wait another post. What a strange place this London is! and what comical geniuses cockneys are!—You would be really diverted at the droll appearance every street presents on one of these keen frosty mornings, especially about Cheapside and the Exchange.

People are naturally in a hurry there, but a sharp air makes perfect racers of them: every one wants to push along faster than the crowd will let him, and one who is not of a tolerable temper will find himself grow cold and peevish both at once in a quarter of an hour's walking, especially if he has had the ill fortune to meet an alehouse boy with his pots, or a city alderman with his breakfast in his belly; these two nuisances being in a man's way, let him fly to which side he will. I laughed heartily the other day at a fat surly cheesemonger in Holborn; he had been jostled somewhat roughly by a young coxcomb of an officer, and thought himself bound to resent it; but in making a stroke with his cane his foot slipped and down he tumbled, while his adversary, in avoiding the blow, stepped backwards into a heap of ice that had been laid up at a pastry-cook's door. I was laughing at the two fallen heroes, and looking back as I walked on, when, before I was aware, my head encountered a basket of tobacco pipes on a porter's shoulder, and had nearly dismounted it: I took half of a hearty curse with me, but another jostle came just in time to catch the rest. The ladies are not less diverting than the men, and stumble full as often, though they guard

sufficiently against falling: when a lady falls in the street, it commonly causes a few more tumbles, as every man thinks it his duty to run and offer his assistance.

Christmas is but half Christmas here, and seems very strange to one who has been used to north-country customs: I have not had a single night's diversion but one at Jenny Horsley's sister's, I mean Simpson's the tailor: we had a jovial bout there indeed, and I made myself not only merry, but useful in my way, by scraping a few Cumberland jigs on the fiddle, to the great diversion of old Jenny, who danced like bedaft, and made all our sport. Twelfth-day is a great day here among the pastry-cooks and the apprentices; and young people of the lower class meet together to choose king and queen. There was in St. Giles's that night a queen who got drunk and broke a chimney-sweep's arm, while a dustman was sent to the round-house for abusing the king her consort. Would to Heaven every one that abuses the king were served in like manner! With this loyal wish I conclude my merry letter, and, wishing you all a happy new year, am sincerely

"Yours, &c.

"Mark Lonsdale."

Lonsdale very soon got introduced to Sadler's Wells, and was a long time the author and conductor, saving two thirds of his salary to pay off a mortgage on a small family estate, which, when redeemed, would enable a female relative to marry. We have seen the letter he wrote to me in 1809. Soon after I was at Drury-Lane, I had a letter of the deepest distress from him, requesting I would solicit the company of Drury-Lane for subscriptions to realize a pound or two. All the (professed) saints on the face of the earth are not a hundredth part so ready to assist distress as theatrical performers: in twelve hours I raised thirty-two pounds for Lonsdale, and Mr. Arnold desired me to offer him a situation as housekeeper of the Lyceum. This was doing my friend a solid and permanent service, and doubled and trebled the good news I had to send poor Mark of the subscription. He came to town—grateful, but spirit-broken, and, as it eventually turned out, heart-broken. A very numerous and respectable set of people, professing to be his friends, accompanied his body (which I attended) to the grave, scarcely one of whom had stretched forth a hand to help him while he lived. Were I to publish the letters (and they were many) he sent me before

and after he came to London for the last time, they would do him the greatest credit, but would not raise me in the opinion of those friends (if I have any) who think I have some modesty left. I shall, however, without meaning the slightest offence to any professional folks, give a fair idea of Lonsdale's professional sentiments, (which he never thought would meet the light,) found among his papers after his death; and which show that he understood something of management, and the interior of a theatre: they are a very Cumberlandish in-knee'd sort of homely truisms:—

"*Memoanda relative to Sadler's Wells, &c.*

"No person taking benefits should be allowed to introduce new performers to sing songs, or play particular characters: these chance bargains seldom turn out creditable to the theatre; on the contrary, they often contribute to get the house into disrepute, and disgust a number of visitors, who think them part of the regular company provided for the season.

"The experience of every season *must* convince a stage manager that no point whatever is to be gained by giving what is called 'individual accommodation' to any performer in the progress

of business. It is better to go on with the regular chain of management, under no restraint as to particular wishes of particular performers: in obliging one, either by calling rehearsals out of course, or excusing such individual from business, you are certain to disoblige all the rest; for the members of a theatrical company are so much like other people, that, notwithstanding their professions of friendship to the manager, or good fellowship with one another;—the moment a cause of discontent, real or imaginary, presents itself to an individual, a hundred solid benefits and accommodations are forgotten; the managers are spoken of as every thing bad; brother performers are abused as a set of d—d ungenerous, worthless beings; and the hero of the occasion declares himself everywhere to be the most injured man living upon the face of the earth."

No actor will feel offended at these posthumous opinions, unless the application of them can be made to himself; and the memory of poor Lonsdale, who spent half his salary in treats and friendly assistances to the actors over whom he was placed,—will escape censure from all those whom his observations do not reach.

After "Policy," a comedy, and "Jean de Paris," a farce, had been produced, (the latter

from the French by Mr. Arnold, who, though he began at the eleventh hour, completely anticipated a piece on the same subject which had been long in preparation at Covent-Garden,) I wrote, jointly with Mr. Arnold, "the Ninth Statue," which proved a golden one to me: my coadjutor very handsomely made me a present of his share of the copy-right, which I sold to Mr. Miller, who had no sooner printed it, than a pirated copy of the first scenes made its appearance in a magazine of the day, with a promise "to be continued." Mr. Miller applied to the Lord Chancellor for an injunction against this intrusion on the copy-right, which was granted: I was present in court when the application was made, and heard it argued. As it was necessary to compare the copies, Lord Eldon read part of the first scene in my book aloud. Little did I think, when I was writing it, that I should have the honour of hearing the Lord Chancellor of England gravely recite to his solemn auditory,—"That's a great big bouncer, by St. Patrick! a descendant from the kings of Munster knows the use of a head better than that comes to; and if your majesty happens to know the township of Ballymaroon, a little to the right of Killmurraymackmahon, county Clare, province of Munster, kingdom of Ireland,

—you come slap upon the place at once." "This is a specimen of the sublime!" observed his Lordship, on laying down the book. For my part, I could have staid and heard him read all day; but he *decided instantly*, and my bookseller gained his point: this melo-drame was performed thirty-two nights. The pantomime this season was invented and produced by Mr. Kirby, the clown, who died lately in America: I had to put the recitatives and songs into form for him: the subject was "The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor;" and the piece was very successful.

On the 6th of March, 1815, my wife presented me with another son, who, as well as his brother, (thank God!) yet lives; and five days afterwards, I presented the public with a farce called "Past Ten o'Clock," which, through the talent of the actors and the great kindness with which it was received by the audience, also lives, and has become a stock farce at Drury-Lane: it was acted twenty-seven nights the first season, and has been very often repeated. Mr. Munden's part of Dozey in this farce was given with the same excellence which characterized his Captain Bertram, Mainmast, and several other parts I had had the good fortune to write for him. Mr. Arnold's opera

of "The Unknown Guest;" and a tragedy, acted but once, called "Ina;"—"Honesty the best Policy," a farce;—"Charles the Bold," a melo-drame; and one or two ephemera for benefit nights; composed the remaining novelties of the season. On the 1st of June Mr. Bannister bade the stage and his public patrons farewell: no actor ever retired more universally respected: Mr. Kenny's comedy of "The World" was acted on this occasion; and, at the conclusion, Mr. Bannister made me a present of his own book, from which I had prompted it, as a *souvenir;* on which I wrote, or rather made, the following *impromptu*:—

In early age,
To tread the stage
Jack would have given the world: (receive it
As genuine truth;)
When past his youth,
He gladly gave "the World" to leave it.

On the 6th of July, Drury-Lane Theatre was closed for that evening, on account of a most melancholy incident, which was thus announced to the public, surrounded by a sable border:—

THEATRE-ROYAL DRURY-LANE.

THURSDAY, JULY 6th, 1815.

The Public are respectfully informed, that in consequence of the sudden and much-lamented

DEATH

OF

MR. WHITBREAD,

To whose active and unremitted exertions they are principally indebted for the

REBUILDING

OF

THIS THEATRE,

THERE WILL BE

NO PERFORMANCE

THIS EVENING.

This theatre, soon after, shut for the vacation, at the commencement of which a circumstance of great importance to *myself* took place, as will be seen by the perusal of the succeeding chapter. And in order to conclude the present one with pleasant intelligence, I must not omit to mention that Drury-Lane Theatre, in the course of the season just closed, lost another great favourite of the public, not by death, but by marriage,—Miss Mellon: and on my benefit night, I received twenty-five pounds for a ticket from Mrs. Coutts. I ought also to state, that in the year preceding, Miss Mellon presented me with five pounds for a gallery ticket, and, in the note accompanying it, good-humouredly desired to have a place kept for her.

On the occasion of Mr. Robert Palmer's completion of the 50th year of his engagement at Drury-Lane, I was applied to by Mr. Raymond to draw up a proposal to the company to subscribe for some token to be presented to Mr. Palmer, expressive of such an intention. This I embodied in the following words:—

"*To the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Theatre-Royal Drury-Lane.*

"It is a subject of regret that theatrical pro-

fessors meet with few friends except among themselves, who justly appreciate their genuine characters: but the promptness and liberality with which they assist each other, and the respect paid to public and private worth in the profession, compensate for the too frequent neglect and degrading opinions of the prejudiced and misinformed among the world at large.

"When examples occur of good conduct and talent united, tending to increase the respectability of the stage, and disarm the hostility of its opposers,—it becomes, in addition to the gratification resulting from such an act, the true interest of the profession to mark substantially an honest and proud sense of fraternal respect towards whoever may thus reflect honour on theatrical pursuits.

"In this point of view it is most respectfully submitted that *Mr. Robert Palmer* has been a member of this theatre more than *fifty years;* during which time the uniform propriety of his conduct has not only distinguished him individually, but has added credit to a stage he has reputably trod beyond the period of *half a century.*

"These observations are preliminary to a suggestion, that a very trifling contribution from

each of his well-wishers in the theatre, consolidated in the form of a medal, or any other tangible token of regard, (the intrinsic value of which must arise from the inscription it may bear,) would confer equal honour on the donors and the gentleman to whom it will be presented. The vehicle of his brethren's affectionate consideration will derive all its worth from the mode of its presentation: and the undersigned will be proud to communicate with those members of the theatre who may feel perfectly disposed to second and aid the intentions of this address.

(Signed) "T. DIBDIN.
"J. G. RAYMOND."

I had the honour to be one of, I think, thirty-two individuals, contributing a guinea each to provide a piece of plate for the occasion, beyond which I had no more to do with an affair which was very badly arranged. Whatever was presented to Mr. Palmer (had it been only a silver pencil-case or a pair of sleeve-buttons) should have been made expressly for the purpose; instead of which, a second-hand silver sporting cup, with a greyhound on the lid, ran away with our good intentions: this, after having been purchased at one of Mr. Robins's sales, and

the subscribers' names engraved on it, was presented to Robert Palmer by a committee of one or two in a hackney-coach, and never did thirty-two guineas produce so inadequate an equivalent.

A27.
MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S ... MAHAL.

CHAP. IV.

1815.

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow."—*Shakspeare.*

Change in the ministry at Drury-Lane—My fourth campaign—Am appointed manager jointly with Mr. Rae—The sub-committee—Earl of Essex—Lord Byron—Honourable Douglas Kinnaird—Honourable G. Lamb—Peter Moore, Esq. M. P.—Difficulties and pleasures—Hard work in the holidays—Night trip to Tunbridge-Wells—"Maid and Magpie"—Failure of "Twenty per Cent"—Good-humour of Lord Essex—Success of "Beggar's Bush," and "The Poet's Last Shilling"—Mr. Bannister—Jack Litchfield—Mr. Wroughton—Stage manager's appointments—Mr. Sheridan and his son.

Soon after the death of Mr. Whitbread, there was a whisper of a change in the management of Drury-Lane Theatre; and, of course, there was to be an alteration in all the official situations. My engagement as prompter having been made by Mr. Arnold for three years, which expired with the last season, I had every reason to suppose that if that gentleman resigned, those he had brought in would go out with him. I

happened to say in the office of Mr. Warren, (a sort of comptroller among the money and check-takers, and high in committee confidence,) "I do not imagine I shall remain as prompter if the management is altered."—"That you certainly will not," was his reply; "for I will lay you a new hat you will be appointed manager yourself." This I, at the time, considered as a joke, but shortly afterwards received overtures, which led to my eventual appointment: I was to have no rise of salary; but, retaining my £520 per annum, to have my benefit on the Saturday before Passion Week; and, as heretofore, I was to make the house no charge for producing a pantomime at Christmas, and a temporary one-act piece on the occurrence of any public event worth celebrating. I stipulated that some gentleman on the stage should be appointed my assistant, with respect to addressing the audience on any occasion; and also, as I was to be entrusted with much of the correspondence of the house, and other matters transacted in the manager's room, such gentleman would, being actively employed in the stage business himself, without much extra trouble be able to attend to rehearsals. I was asked to name my coadjutor, and mentioned my old friend Russell, between whom and Mr. Kinnaird a correspondence was imme-

diately opened; but they came to no arrangement: the late Mr. Rae was then proposed to me; his salary was to be increased from fifteen to eighteen pounds per week; and, as among five gentlemen there will unavoidably be different opinions, an endeavour was once or twice made by one of the committee to invest Mr. Rae with a larger share of the management than belonged to myself, which was exactly the converse of my incipient agreement—even to a proposition not made with the slightest delicacy, that I should keep the prompter's room, and resign the more commodious apartment close to the stage to Mr. Rae. I instantly tendered my entire resignation, and at length thought I conceded quite enough in accepting a complete equality of engagement jointly with Mr. Rae, than whom a more gentlemanly or better-meaning co-adjutor I could not have had; but my years and experience, particularly on that very spot, gave me—I am vain enough to say it, because it is true,—gave me a decided professional superiority, and qualified me for a less limited exercise of discretion in almost all technical matters relative to the theatre; and I can solemnly aver that this feeling alone,—a very just one,—gave birth to the desire I had to be unfettered in my zeal for the interests of the establishment. It was, however,

a perfectly useless struggle for a shadow; for while Rae and I were debating what portion of power would be proper for each or either to possess, a very few days' experience evinced that we were to have no power at all. I would gladly have retreated; but pride submitting to prudence, I agreed to be part and parcel in the nominal government of "Dibdin and Rae" or "Rae and Dibdin," for so official papers from the treasurer, and other officers of the house, were, with an affectation of etiquette (like partnerships on each side a shop-door of "Spriggins and Frisby"—"Frisby and Spriggins,") with whimsical alternation, addressed to us. It was very soon arranged by the committee that Mr. Rae should be immediately dispatched to France, and the sum of fifty pounds voted for his expenses, besides his salary. I would gladly have gone, without putting the noble and honourable joint-stock company to any expense at all; because, as an author, I might have made a profitable selection from what was acting in Paris to the future benefit of Drury-Lane, whereas eventually nothing came from France through this arrangement: but it was at least some balm for my *amour-propre* to be told by the committee,—"No, sir, you cannot be spared; you, as prompter here, have been three years in the

councils of management, and are too well acquainted with the business of the house in detail, not to be of the greatest use in making our arrangements, during the summer, for the approaching winter." All this was very flattering, and pretty well meant; and, in consequence, I remained the whole summer in the manager's room from ten till four by day, and then worked at home from after dinner till bedtime, without one week of relaxation; but I still think a month in Paris would have done me and the house more good, because Mr. Rae's going there did not produce a single result, good or bad. Our first new piece, "The Maid and Magpie," was sent from Paris by a gentleman already confidentially placed by the sub-committee in the pay of the theatre.

My summer's employ consisted in receiving, reading, submitting to the committee, and, by their orders, answering the numerous daily and hourly applications and manuscripts of every sort from authors, actors, artists, tradesmen, servants of all denominations, mechanists, stage-carpenters, &c. &c. &c.; and as the gentlemen of the sub-committee, one or other, (three being a quorum,) generally met every forenoon, and sat late, my really valuable time (as it might have been) was frittered away in conversations which,

from the very zeal which dictated a variety of opinions, oftener led *from* rather than *to* the points of business to be settled.

I had now five masters and a co-adjutor to go on peaceably with, before the desires, fears, hopes, and whims of the congregated establishment were yet added to my cares: I say mine; for by the absence of my partner, though ranking only as half manager, I had the whole of the work to do, and all its responsibility: but it takes much to depress me, and I met it as I could. I am quite aware of the delicacy it will require to describe the exact nature of my position, as connected with the five nobles and gentlemen with whom I now had the honour to be daily associated, and with whose proceedings I was so much necessarily identified. I shall set out at once with affirming, that no five men ever appeared to, or, I believe, *could* feel more for the welfare of the theatre, than they did; or could be more anxious, not merely to fulfil, but to exceed, if necessary, whatever labours their honorable association in the service of Drury-Lane might involve: and I am moreover of opinion, that though, as will be seen by their correspondence, the condescensions and kindness I received from all, entitle them, in different degrees, as individuals, to my respectful

gratitude;—yet, collectively, they did not treat me well; nor do I doubt but that at this time such is very nearly, if not quite, their own view of the subject. I hope and believe I conducted myself with equal respect to all; nor will they deny, that where I thought it my duty to express the different lights in which I but too often beheld points where the good of the theatre was concerned, I gave my sentiments with so little ceremony, as more than once to run great risk, however unintentionally, of giving offence. I scarcely need state that the sub-committee was composed of the Earl of Essex, Lord Byron, the Hon. George Lamb, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, and Mr. P. Moore, M. P.

It may be remembered by some, that when, at the end of the season, my engagement was not renewed, I addressed a letter to the public, in a style, as one of the public prints termed it, of subdued resentment. After which, all unpleasant feeling was forgotten; and I had the honour of being visited, or noticed, in my after government of the Surrey Theatre by all but Lord Byron, who had then finally left England; and at parting, besides a handsome present from his lordship at my benefit, I had to boast of the following tokens of the good-will of the whole committee:—Lord Byron presented me, in addition to

what is named above, with about two hundred beautiful drawings of Turkish costume, exhibiting the correct habits of all classes in the Ottoman Empire, executed under his lordship's immediate inspection when he was first in the Levant, and almost invaluable to me in my capacity of stage director. The Earl of Essex, besides the exercise of great hospitality and affable condescension towards me in my frequent visits, by invitation, to Stanhope-street and Cassiobury-park, made me a present of two pies and a picture; but take this with you, reader! the pies were each large enough to have fed a moderate family for a week, being lined with whole turkeys, game, &c. &c. and the portrait, handsomely mounted and framed, was his lordship's own, to which he added a scarce and elegant proof print of one of his ancestors. On my taking a lease of the Surrey Theatre, Mr. Moore took me to his bankers, Messrs. Cocks and Biddulph, and, totally unsolicited by me, as a token of his regard, desired they would give me credit for the sum of £500, which they promptly did; and after my theatre had been some time open, the money was repaid them. I should add, that I had constant invitations (and often accepted them) to the tables of Mr. Moore, Mr. Kinnaird, and Mr. Lamb: the latter introduced me to Lord and Lady

Melbourne: Lord Byron introduced me to Lady Byron: add to which, the Hon. Mr. Lamb gave me an Irish song, and the Hon. Mr. Kinnaird gave me—leave to go. Thus I was placed under very considerable obligations to every one.

In proof of the urbanity and kindness which prevailed among much good-humoured difference of opinion respecting attainment of the same object,—I shall take the liberty of producing letters of business from each member of the sub-committee. I have in my possession between one and two hundred, above sixty of them from the Earl of Essex alone. I shall select only one or two, which were not confidential, and which may serve to show the anxiety of the parties for the business of the house, as also to prove how much of that business I had to attend to.

From Lord Essex, in consequence of one of many appeals or remonstrances from Mr. Rae and myself—and in which I acknowledged the particular kindness of two of the sub-committee, I received,—

"Dear Sir,

"I am always glad when you meet with kindness, because I am sure you deserve it. I was obliged to leave the committee in a hurry, and had not time to tell you that I read

your letter and Mr. Rae's to the committee, and that every thing will be done, I trust, as you can wish, and I may say, without flattery, as our interests require.

"Ever yours very faithfully,

"ESSEX."

Friday night.

While Mr. Lamb was on the circuit, I wrote to him, two or three times a week, minute and impartial statements of our operations at the theatre, with the amount of receipts, preponderance of approbation or displeasure among the audience, successes, failures, discontents, and satisfactions of the actors, debates in the committee, &c. &c. To one of these gazettes Mr. Lamb replies:—

"Liverpool—in court—January 15th.

"Dear Sir,

"I have been so hurried, I have had no time to write: your letter this morning is the first I have received. I have not heard from ****. I was sorry, for many reasons, I was forced to leave the committee so early the Friday before last. Your account of our going on is satisfactory. How is the new tragedy cast? I shall have much to do on my return to London, so

that I would wish to be rid of writing the epilogue: I wish Mr. Kinnaird, or some of you, would manage it for me. *You* have your hands full."

In commenting, very properly, on a disappointment on a performer's first appearance, Mr. Lamb concludes thus:—

"I am not very sorry for it. The best thing in a theatre, next to decisive success, is decided failure: mediocrity is the ruin of a theatre; you pay as dearly for it as for excellence, and receive as little as for perfect imbecility. I can write no more: I am arraigned for stealing India rubber, and must defend. Remember me to Mr. Rae. I hope to see you all on Monday.

"Yours, &c.

"G. Lamb."

From the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird.

"Dear Sir,

"I fear I shall not have it in my power to come to the theatre this evening. Please to let me know to-night, after you have learnt the first receipt, what you think of ****'s opera, now you have read the third act. Please to show the enclosed to Lord Byron and your colleague, and inform me what answer is to be

given. I take this opportunity of stating that I think first appearances should not be permitted to interrupt good business; and this, I trust, we shall continue to have. When (at what hour) is 'The New Way to Pay Old Debts' rehearsed to-morrow? Was there a rehearsal of 'Love for Love' to-day, as promised? Mr. Lamb is very anxious no time should be lost in getting that out: I entirely agree with him. Should Mr. Kean play four times a week constantly? I suppose, however, he must play four times next week; Richard, Monday, &c. &c. in which case 'Love for Love' may be produced Wednesday week. I send you something for publication: add some more of your own. I cannot give a very favourable account of the piece I was condemned to hear yesterday. Speak to Lord Byron about the 'Spanish Friar:' he promised to read and castigate it.

"Your obedient servant,

"DOUGLAS KINNAIRD."

On another occasion:—

"Dear Sir,

"I send you the *pie voleuse:* I have written to Paris for the costumes and the music of it. I quite agree with you about the new pieces: set to work about the opera for Cooke;

I have great hopes that in Cooke's plan Mrs. Dickons might be successfully introduced in a comic elderly character, and Bellamy's powers of mimicry in the Italian style brought to bear. Mr. * * * * * * I will talk to you about: he is assuredly not worth more than 4*l.* per week; he is sometimes above mediocrity, and at others is ludicrous and burlesque. I am delighted at the prospect of engaging Mrs. M'Gibbon at 8*l.* 9*l.* 10*l.* per week, but it must be in lieu of Mrs. somebody else: we will talk about it to-morrow. There is a tragedy of Mr. Sotheby with a part for Kean in it. Speak to Kelly about the opera that was to have been for his benefit,—a translation or words made for the music of Mozart, *Cosi fan tutte.* I am to receive from Raymond to-morrow a good many pieces he has got on with. Will you have the goodness to send them enclosed? I will be at the theatre to-morrow at four o'clock, and shall hope to find you will have been setting all hands to work on what is to be done.

"Your obedient servant,

"DOUGLAS KINNAIRD."

The next will show that, independently of his kindness at the banker's, Mr. Moore's anxieties for the theatre were not unmingled with personal feeling respecting my (at that time)

very indifferent state of health. How had my weary way been cheered, on my peripatetic tour to Eastbourne, could I have anticipated the subjoined sympathy of a sub-committee man of "the Great Grand" National Theatre!

"I send my promised bottle: my complaint was nearly what yours seems to be; and I had prescribed for me the Epsom salts and oil of mint, and this bottle. I found the first so effectual, that I never used the second, as you will observe the bottle has never been opened. I think the salts and mint will also relieve you; but I send the bottle to be at your disposal, take it or not: keep to the salts and oil of mint as your best resort; and if not soon relieved, take them every day, as usual, without intermission, till your whole frame is sensible of health's relief, a feeling that will tell its own story. I wish it speedily.

"Yours faithfully,

"P. Moore."

Great George-street, Friday evening.

I received the following from Lord Byron, after a meeting in which it was resolved, among other matters, *unâ voce* by the whole committee, that no free admissions should be issued :—

"Dear Sir,

"You will oblige me with a couple of pit orders for this night, particularly if prohibited.

"Yours very truly,

"BYRON."

"P.S. I mean two orders for one each—single admission."

His Lordship again, after hearing a new piece read:—

"Dear Sir,

"Is not part of the dialogue in the new piece a little too double, if not too broad, now and then? for instance, the word 'ravish' occurs in the way of question, as well as a remark, some half dozen times in the course of one scene, thereby meaning, not raptures, but rape. With regard to the probable effect of the piece, you are the best judge: it seems to me better and worse than many others of the same kind. I hope you got home at last, and that Miss —— has recovered from the eloquence of my colleague, which, if it convinced, it is the first time,—I do not mean the first time his eloquence had that effect,—but that a woman could be convinced she was not fit for any thing on any stage.

"Yours truly,

"BYRON."

Among other preparations for the opening, it was arranged that Mr. Dowton should be asked to play Shylock; that "The Maid and Magpie" should be cast, as it is termed, with the strength of the company; and, in consequence, parts were assigned to Messrs. Dowton and Munden, certainly not equal to their talent; but, as some anxiety was expressed by the committee that no refusal of parts should cast a shade on our opening, we were requested to ascertain, as quickly as possible, whether those gentlemen would or would not undertake the characters. Our council broke up at three o'clock that day; and I proposed to Mr. Rae, who had recently returned from France, that we should immediately set off for Tunbridge Wells, where, fortunately, Messrs. Dowton and Munden were both playing, in order to read the piece to them, arrange the matter, and return in time to surprise the committee at the usual time of meeting next day. This we accomplished, as well as the aim of our journey; got to the Wells to supper; obtained assent from both gentlemen, who were much pleased with our attention; set off for town at five in the morning, and gratified the committee at noon with the intelligence that all was as they wished. It was then settled to open the theatre with "The

Maid and Magpie;" but while we were congratulating ourselves on the idea of preceding Covent-Garden with this attractive importation, and being the first to bring it before the public, we all quite forgot that Mr. Arnold's theatre was yet open; and where, by the manager's indefatigable exertions, the Maid of Palaiseau's first appearance took place; but this was no fault, nor do I think it acted otherwise than well for the interests of Drury-Lane; the piece having been received with the greatest applause, and repeated, for the short remainder of Mr. Arnold's season, just often enough to give the town an appetite for its continued representation. Such proved to be its effect, when produced on the second night of our season, that the half-price receipts, for many evenings, were above the nightly average of a hundred and forty pounds.

We opened, September 9th, with "John Bull" and "The Adopted Child," and on the 12th brought out "The Maid and Magpie." As the performers seldom meet all together about the commencement of a season, until a day or two before performance, there are very few instances of a novelty's having been produced so early as on a second night; but we had transmitted manuscripts of their respective characters to those who were in the country, convened an

early meeting of those who were in town, and left nothing unattempted to accomplish the desired object. Complete success was the consequence; every department had effectively exhibited an equal degree of zeal; and all felt amply rewarded when the following letter from the committee was promulgated:—

Clarges-street, Sept. 13th, 1815.

"Gentlemen,

"I beg leave, in the name of the sub-committee, to offer you our thanks for those exertions which enabled us to present to the public, last night, such early proofs of your talent and zeal. You are requested to convey to the performers of the new piece the grateful sense we entertain of their very handsome, and I need not say successful, zeal in behalf of the property, for the success of which it will be ever our best reward that all connected with it should feel equally interested. I beg to congratulate you on this auspicious commencement of Mr. Byrne's co-operation in the ballets, as well as on the first display of Mr. Greenwood's talents under the new management: to both those gentlemen it is the wish of the committee that you express their thanks.

"I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

"DOUGLAS KINNAIRD."

To the joint-acting managers
of Drury-Lane Theatre.

On the 14th Mr. T. Cooke made his *début* in Carlos in "The Duenna," and Mr. Harley in "Lissardo" on the 16th,—all lucky beginnings to our reign. Being desired by the committee to sell the copy-right of "The Maid and Magpie" for their friend, who had sent it from Paris, I applied to my old publishers, Whittingham and Arliss, who bid very little. Lord Byron succeeded better, as his own words to me will certify:

13, Piccadilly-terrace, Sept. 23d, 1815.

"Dear Sir,

"I enclose Mr. Murray's bill (£40) for "The Magpie," which is ten or twenty more than your publishers offer: he wishes the manuscript to be sent to Mr. Dove, printer, whose address he does not mention: the print of Miss Kelly should go with it; and any little memoir of the story would do to set off the preface. I suppose we have done all for —— which we could, and have got him a decent price. You should have Mr. Sotheby's tragedy in hand: it is, I think, in the committee-room: but I have let loose the author upon you; so now shift for yourself. When will Kean be out? I think he should be announced. I have great hopes of

Dowton's Shylock, and Iago, if he will take the latter.

"Yours truly,

"BYRON."

"P. S. Murray is not in town, but at Chichester; his draft is, however, dated London, which I suppose will make no difference."

On the 26th Mrs. Mardyn appeared in the part of Amelia Wildenhaim, and Miss Johnson (who afterwards went to America) on the third of October in Amanthis. Mr. Dowton played Shylock on the 5th and 12th: Mr. Kean appeared in Richard on the 20th; and Miss Nash from Bath in Polly on the 30th. I think, had not Miss Nash been almost constantly indisposed after her engagement, she would have proved a valuable acquisition to the theatre.

As Mr. Lamb and Lord Essex were at this time both from town, I now kept a sort of *journal raisonné* for each, and sent it by post as often as a sheet was full. This is another of Mr. Lamb's replies:—

Liverpool, in court, Oct. 25, 1815.

"Dear Sir,

"I only write because I am ashamed of receiving such long and entertaining letters without acknowledgment. My time has been

so much taken up, that I am obliged to seize this opportunity, during an uninteresting trial, for stealing empty casks,—a very spiritless robbery. I have much to say; but as I hope, without fail, to appear among you on Monday or Tuesday next, I shall defer most of it till then. We must get "Beggar's Bush" in hand and out; for as Kean likes the character, it will most probably give him the lift we want; I shall write to Mr. Kinnaird about it. We must do something striking to counteract the expected attraction of Mrs. Alsop at the other house; for though the description of her I have heard from an eye-witness is by no means appalling, still any power of acting, combined with the name of Mrs. Jordan's daughter, must ensure celebrity for a little time. I have most flattering accounts of Miss Nash from those who have seen her at Bath. Plague on her hoarseness! let her have the very best advice. We have not conquered the turn yet, (*i. e.* got the lead of the rival theatre,) and must still put our best leg foremost. The plan of your harlequinade is the most full of fun of any I ever remember: take care there is enough of it: Kirby's pantomime of last year was ridiculously short. I still have great hopes of a tragedy from Coleridge: Jean Bart at the other house is not to be sneezed at."

After many more directions and merry observations, evincing how very heartily his feelings were engaged in the welfare of Drury, the honourable and learned gentleman concludes :—

"I am interrupted pleasingly by a fresh brief to read. I must state that my acquaintance with the attorney who brings it arose entirely from his attachment to the theatre, and eagerness to recommend some country actors to me. If I get on at the bar by managing a theatre, it will be the most novel rise ever known in any court. Remember me to Mr. Rae, and all friends who remember me. I feel almost among them again.

"Yours ever truly,

"G. LAMB."

On the fourth of November I produced a farce I had translated, and adapted from the French, and given it the title of "Twenty per Cent:" it was acted only four nights; and, in spite of its failure, Messrs. Whittingham and Arliss, of Paternoster-row, bought the copy-right. The reader is aware that I have never ventured to arraign, or wished to disturb, the verdict of the public; but in this instance I had strong evidence, both before and subsequently to the representation,

that a party was made against the farce by persons who ridiculously enough felt themselves aggrieved at the title of TWENTY per Cent!—several highly respectable pawnbrokers assured me of a determination, like that of the Jews with respect to "Family Quarrels," that it should not be heard. The committee, one and all, were of this opinion; and when I insisted on its being withdrawn, (lest the town should imagine I exerted undue influence as manager,) Mr. Kinnaird (who never on any occasion flattered me) wrote thus:—

"Dear Sir,

"If you can make it convenient to call on me before two o'clock, you will find Mr. Lamb with me. I think you are too precipitate in withdrawing your farce, and I should like to think twice on that matter before it is resolved on. Please to come, or send word where we can meet this evening: I dine out. Pray come at two, if you can.

"Your obedient servant,

"DOUGLAS KINNAIRD."

On receiving my Journal of the week following, Lord Essex replies,—

Cassiobury, Nov. 12th, 1815.

"Dear Sir,

"Your Journal of to-day (if it does not give you too much trouble) is really most satisfactory, interesting, and amusing; but pray let it be always so done as not to deprive you of those few moments of leisure so necessary both for your comfort as well as amusements. I cannot bear to occupy your time, while you have so many other calls on it: only spare me a few short words in Dr. Pangloss's style,—as 'Wednesday £420 gross receipts,—play went off well,—Miss Nash in good voice,—Mr. * * * * in a d—d passion,—Peter Moore got a new wig: Thursday, house crammed,—an alderman and his wife nearly squeezed to death. T. D.' and no beginnings and endings of 'your Lordship,' and 'obedient servants:' it is too much, and must not be. If you have an inclination to take a little fresh air, return here with my carriage: I shall be happy to see you; or if your subjects require, this evening, the attendance of both kings, I send up my landau and four horses to-morrow: it will leave town about four, and we do not dine till seven. I have directed my porter to receive your orders. Send a man from the theatre, about one, to fetch the books I have sent

you, and let the porter know your determination.

"Yours very faithfully,
"Essex."

His Lordship concludes another equally affable and condescending letter with,

"Yours, Essex, with the gout in his foot.

"P. S. This is my foot upon a stool."

There is something curious in observing the different modes in which correspondents, on some occasions, conclude their letters. Every mark of equality finishes four out of five of the letters I am here honoured with; and the honourable gentleman who alone opposed four fifths of my intended measures, and at length disposed of myself,—is the only "obedient servant" I had to boast of in the whole sub-committee. "Obedient! very obedient!"

I cannot help relating here an exceedingly good-humoured trait of Lord Essex, who happened to be so very similar in face, person, and dress, to a respectable tradesman who supplied the theatre with goods to a large amount,—that

I one day ran after his Lordship's gig, and insisted on his giving me a ride on my road to Drury-Lane, under the idea I was addressing Mr. —— : his Lordship laughed at the mistake, and drove me to the theatre, where we had scarcely entered, (it being rather dark in the day-time behind the scenes,) when the master carpenter gave his Lordship a slap on the shoulder, accompanied with—"You are a pretty fellow to keep our painters all waiting for colour!" On perceiving his error, Mr. Chip stood aghast. "Well," said his Lordship, "this is the second time to-day I have been mistaken for—no matter who: he must be some jolter-headed fellow, or you never would have both found a likeness."

November 15th produced "Who's who?" a farce from the French, by Mr. Poole; on the 23d, Mr. Leigh's comedy of "Where to find a Friend," the prologue written by Mr. Rae, the epilogue by the Hon. Mr. Lamb; and I wrote a song in the play for Mr. J. Johnstone. My brother Charles produced a very successful operatic farce called "My Spouse and I," on the 7th; Mr. Kinnaird gave us his revived and adapted play of "The Merchant of Bruges, or Beggar's Bush," on the 14th, and the 26th closed the labours of the year (though not of the season) with "Harlequin and Fancy, or the Poet's

last Shilling." Of "The Merchant of Bruges," my manager's private diary of business speaks thus:—"The revived play of 'The Merchant of Bruges' met with most decided applause: the address, written by J. Hobhouse, Esq. was spoken by Mr. Pope; the epilogue was not written in time to be spoken this evening."—"Friday, 15th. The epilogue was finished, and this evening spoken by Mr. Harley with considerable effect."

With respect to the pantomime, it answered all expectations: Lord Essex, who was confined to Cassiobury by a Christmas party, writes,—

Cassiobury, Dec. 28, 1815.

"Dear Sir,

"I laughed most heartily when I read your pantomime, and thought it remarkably good; and I am delighted that it has been so successful. Mr. G. Lamb is here, and has given me the best account of it. I shall always look back with regret upon those circumstances which prevented our seeing you this moment in company with that respectable young man, Mr. John Horner, who is in the act of putting his finger into the Christmas pie; and that you may not suppose I have forgotten my old friends, I have sent you one, which I trust will prove

worthy of being partaken of by *your friends*, and bring to your remembrance

"Yours, very faithfully and sincerely,

"ESSEX.

"I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Dibdin."

On the same subject Mr. Lamb says,—

"Dear Sir,

"I wish you joy of your success in your pantomime. Covent-Garden, having Grimaldi to support them, ought to blush scarlet for letting us even cope with them at all; but letting us beat them, as I understand they have, they ought to drown themselves. I shall not be at ease till some new first piece is actually in rehearsal: revivals are very pretty side-dishes, but won't do for the principal articles of the feast.

"Yours ever truly,

"G. LAMB."

Meaning to commence a new chapter with the new year, I shall finish the present with recollections of some old and respected friends. In the outset of my appointment, I had great pleasure in forwarding to Mr. Bannister a privilege in favour of himself and family, for which

Mr. Rae had heartily joined me in applying to the committee, and which was thus handsomely acknowledged :—

65, Gower-street, Sept. 4, 1815.

" My dear Sir,

" I feel much obliged to you and Mr. Rae for the friendly note which I have just had the pleasure of receiving; and although it may be proper to acknowledge this extended and additional kindness to the gentlemen of the committee, yet I am well aware that it has been granted at the suggestion of you and Mr. Rae (to whom I request my best regards); and with every possible good wish for your success, I remain

" Yours truly,

" J. BANNISTER."

As several freedoms of the theatre were this year voted to literary men, I asked for the favour of one card, and one only; it was for John Litchfield, of the Privy-Council Office, husband of the popular actress, and many years editor of the "Monthly Mirror" and "Cabinet;"—an old friend, who, although I have had no opportunity of mentioning him earlier, ever took a

warm interest in my welfare; and those who know him will say it is a credit to have received from him the following:—

"Dear Dibdin,

"A compliment so handsome, unexpected, and, circumstanced as I am at present, so unmerited, as that which was paid me last night, cannot but be most highly valued, and gratefully acknowledged. The privilege it affords me is a very agreeable one, but the manner and the time of its being granted I estimate infinitely beyond the admission itself. I consider myself entirely indebted to your friendship for all this. Accept my best thanks, and believe me still, what I have ever been since I first knew you,

"Yours sincerely and faithfully,

"JOHN LITCHFIELD."

36, Bedford-street,
Tuesday, Jan. 16, 1816.

"Love to Nancy and the little ds."

I once wrote to my friend Terry, to ask something of his Adelphi Theatre for my masters the proprietors of Sadler's Wells. I suppose I did

not send a very formal note, for this was his answer:

Dear T. D.
So let it B.
Yours D. T.

A question having arisen as to the remuneration which had been usually given to acting or stage managers at Drury-Lane, I took the freedom of writing to the late Mr. Wroughton on the subject, who favoured my inquiries with the annexed response. Mr. Wroughton had known me from infancy, was a chief mate in the "Keep the Line," and I need not say was held in the highest respect by the whole of the theatrical profession:—

"My dear Sir,

"You are heartily welcome, at all times, to any information in my power. I received for years previous to, as well as during the period of my being acting or stage manager, £100 for a benefit, merged into my weekly salary: for the above office I received for the first year £200 only; I then demanded £340, which, with £500 as an actor, including £100 for bene-

fits, made the whole amount to eight hundred guineas per annum. This was the case of,

"Dear Sir, yours truly,

"RICH. WROUGHTON."

29, Berners-street,
Mar. 16, 1816.

"P. S.—I understand Mr. Kemble received £500 as manager: I have heard he made them pay £300 more in benefits: if this is not intelligible, you shall have it *viva voce*."

I have said we closed the labours of the old year with bringing out the new pantomime, but forgot to add that Mrs. Barnes, an English lady from the American theatre, made her first appearance in London at Drury-Lane as Juliet, on the 29th of December: ill health prevented her from following up her successful *début*. She again crossed the Atlantic, and again reigned the favourite of New-York and Philadelphia. In the summer previous to our opening, while I was one day very busy in council with the sub-committee, I was highly gratified by seeing Sir William Rawlins enter the room; and, addressing the gentlemen present, he said he had just heard that Mr. T. Dibdin, (a boy of his) of whom he was proud, had been appointed a ma-

nager of Drury-Lane Theatre, and that, in consequence, he (Sir William) wished to purchase a freedom of the theatre for his life. He was referred to Mr. Ward the secretary; and then, turning round, he discovered me, and a very friendly greeting ensued. He warmly invited me to dine with him, and afterwards to accompany him on an approaching day's "jollification" on board the City Navigation Barge. The latter proposition I gladly accepted, as I was to meet many of Sir William's friends who remembered me when a boy. I wrote a song for the occasion, which was received like another "Little Cherub;" and—*carpe diem*—for that day forgot Drury-Lane, the committee, and all but the friends who vied with each other in showing me kindness and civility.

Among the distinguished or fashionable characters I have had the pleasure of meeting round the convivial board, through the introduction of Mr. Harris, Mr. Colman, and my masters of the committee, were Mr. Sheridan and his son, the late Earl Craven and his brother the Hon. Berkeley Craven, Lord Braybrook, Sir John Shelley, the late Doctor Moseley, the Hon. Edmund Byng, and many others; and I hope that if I conclude this chapter with a note, however

trifling, from each of the two first-named gentlemen, I shall, from the respect I bear their memories, be forgiven :—

Saville-row, Friday evening.

"Dear Sir,

"This is the first application I make to your new Directory; I am very earnest in urging it: it is in favour of Robert Fairbrother, an old and true servant to me and to the theatre, though latterly discountenanced. I will pledge my life for his zeal, integrity, and ability in whatever he may be employed. What the line is in which he may be made most useful, Mr. Ward is most competent to explain. I say nothing of his large family, many of whom are qualified to give fair assistance to the theatre. I have only to add, that your kind attention to this will oblige me more than I can express.

"Yours,

"R. B. Sheridan."

It will be seen by the next note, that I had promised Mr. T. Sheridan a song (Dido), which not having sent, from oversight or inadvertency, my seeming neglect called on me this refresher :—

"Dear Dibdin,
"having broke my fast,
I'll fully break my mind:
You promised me
A song, d'ye see,
Which I thought very kind:
But promises like pie-crusts last,
And folly 'tis to trust;
A song without the words is like
A pie without a crust.
"With my tooralu tooralu.

"T. SHERIDAN."

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

RAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL * THE

CHAP. V.

1816.

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow."—*Shakspeare.*

Incidents.—Grand night rehearsal of an opera we were not going to perform—"Accusation" at both theatres, and acquittal at Drury-Lane—Attempt to assassinate Miss Kelly —"What Next?"—"Pitcairn's Island"—Notice of my re-engagement with Mr. Rae as manager for the ensuing season—Surrey Theatre—A good bargain, and a bad one—Death of my friend Ben Thompson—Unexpected resolution of the sub-committee—Friendly letters from each of the sub-committee after my quitting Drury-Lane—Valedictory stanzas.

In the first week of the year, Mr. Penley, while playing Roderigo, received accidentally, in the fencing scene with Cassio, a wound in the knee, which deprived us of his services for some days. On the 12th Mr. Kean added a large leaf to his laurel by the reception with which his first appearance in Sir Giles Overreach was honoured.

The 30th of January had for years been to me a clear day of repose from theatrical duties;

but, most unexpectedly, we were summoned to a night rehearsal, if it could be so deemed, of an opera we had entertained no intention of performing with the cast of characters it presented. On the evening in question, orders were given that the *Repetition* should be profoundly private, and yet the boxes exhibited a very brilliant sprinkling of rank and fashion. The piece was "Love in a Village:" Mr. Kean was the Young Meadows, one of the committee rehearsed Hodge and Justice Woodcock, a lady the part of Rosetta, and two Misses Halford, who were afterwards engaged, attempted Lucinda and Madge: Sir George Smart presided in the orchestra, and all the band were summoned, although not entitled to a shilling salary, on account of the theatre being closed from public performance, it being the anniversary of the martyrdom of Charles the First.

Some time previous to the commencement of the opera, a leading actor and an amateur amused themselves, and those present, by trying which could stand on his head during the longest space of time; but as I had seen that sort of thing done equally well, many years back, at the minor theatre I have the honour to manage at this present writing, it did

not compensate me for the loss of my comforts at home by my family fire-side; for it happened to be a true January night, and the stage was more than usually cold even for that period of the year. The two Misses Halford were engaged, and came out afterwards as Rosina and Phœbe, and both were well received.

We had been running a race with Covent-Garden with respect to which house should first present the public with a play from the French, which we named "Accusation, or the Family D'Anglade;" a play in three acts. Covent-Garden gave it, I believe, the latter title, and produced it as an afterpiece. It came to Drury-Lane in nearly the form of a literal translation; and I was favoured with the thankless and very unprofitable job of curtailing, and what is termed, making it fit; but it was much too long, after all the pruning and clipping I was permitted to inflict on it; for all was done under *surveillance* of the higher powers. At length, on the first of February, both pieces were launched, both applauded very much, and neither of them repaid the trouble and expense they had cost. How far the committee of management deemed *our* play successful, may be gathered from their secretary's official note:—

Theatre-Royal Drury-Lane, 2d Feb. 1816.

"Gentlemen,

"I have great pleasure in stating that I am directed by the committee of management to offer their thanks for your extraordinary activity and successful exertions in producing the new play of 'Accusation' with unprecedented celerity. They further request, that you will convey to the ladies and gentlemen engaged in the performance of the play their best acknowledgments for the cheerful alacrity and zeal with which they seconded your exertions.

"I am, gentlemen, your very obedient servant,

"C. Ward, *Sec.*"

To the managers of the
Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane.

On the 15th, Mr. Rae and I had the honour of attending their Imperial Highnesses the Archdukes of Austria, who honoured "Macbeth" and the pantomime with their presence, and expressed themselves in very warm terms of approbation, and that in downright good English.

On the 17th a much less pleasing circumstance occurred, which in my manager's diary is thus recorded: — "On Saturday, February 17th,

during the performance of the first act of 'Modern Antiques, or Merry Mourners,' the audience and performers were thrown into an extreme state of alarm and agitation from a man in the pit, named George Barnet, firing a pistol loaded with shot at Miss Kelly, who was performing the part of Nan: many people quitted the theatre in alarm; but, the man being secured, and sent to Bow-street, tranquillity was at length restored, and the farce proceeded."—Miss Kelly was, of course, much agitated during the remainder of the performance, which she insisted on finishing, though the managers wished, with the consent of the audience, to relieve her from it. I was not present at the man's examination; but on the Monday received from the chief magistrate at Bow-street the following letter:—

Public Office, Bow-street, Monday morning.

"Dear Sir,

"I see, by this morning's papers, it appears that several shots perforated one of the scenes: if that is the case, you must bring some witness to-morrow at three to prove that fact: the case will then be complete. I do not wish to go to the theatre while the examination is

pending; but I wish very much to see either of you here to-day, the sooner the better, about a circumstance I cannot commit to writing.

"Yours faithfully,

"R. Birnie."

T. Dibdin, or A. Rae, Esq.

Mr. Rae attended: the unfortunate man was, I believe, eventually proved to be insane.

On the 29th I produced "What Next?" one of the luckiest of my farces in point of reception: it still keeps the stage: the theatre gave £100 for it, and I had £40 for the copy-right. "The Duke of Milan" was brought out on the 9th of March, to exhibit further proofs of Mr. Kean's talents: that gentleman, and the play, were much applauded.

On the night of my benefit, the 2d of April, a young lady of the name of Murray, introduced by a member of the committee, made her *début* as Cecilia in "The Chapter of Accidents:" she was well received, and repeated the character, but was not engaged. My night, by agreement, should have been on the 6th, but I had the 2d by choice.

On Easter Wednesday I produced a melo-dramatic spectacle called "Pitcairn's Island," which passed without dissent. "The Prodigal,"

the only piece brought from France by Mr. Rae, was brought forward, on the 29th, for that gentleman's benefit, and once repeated. A piece written by an amateur, (said to be one of the committee) and by mistake entered as mine in the manager's book, to celebrate the marriage of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte with the Prince of Cobourg, appeared May 2d with applause; and on the 9th, the Rev. Mr. Maturin's tragedy of "Bertram" experienced a most brilliant reception: Mr. Kean added much to his reputation by his performance of "Bertram;" and Miss Somerville (now Mrs. Bunn) made a successful *début* as the heroine on this occasion.

The day subsequent to the production of the above tragedy, Mr. Ward sent to the manager's room the annexed copy of a minute made by the sub-committee :—

" *Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane.*"

[Extract from the minutes of the sub-committee, 10th May, 1816.]

"The sub-committee order that it be imparted to Mr. Dibdin and Mr. Rae, that it is their intention and wish that they should retain the offices of joint-managers for the ensuing season.

"(True copy.) C. W. Ward."

Some time prior to this I had informed the gentlemen of the sub-committee that I intended taking a lease of the Surrey Theatre, but not to manage it myself while engaged at Drury-Lane; and no objection was made to it.

On the 19th, I had the honour of attending Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, and her husband the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, at the theatre. The public were extremely displeased at the obscurity of the box in which, by choice, Their Royal Highnesses were seated. The Prince most affably expressed his satisfaction at the evening's performance.

A melo-dramatic romance, from the German of Wieland, by my friend Benjamin Thompson, was produced on the 21st, but not with that success we all wished him; the want of which turned out of most melancholy consequence to his family and all his friends.

The 23d completed my twenty-third year of marriage. I never made a better bargain than on the memorable 23d at Manchester, in 1793, nor a worse than on this anniversary, when I took possession (as lessee) of the Surrey Theatre. Mr. John Johnstone accompanied me on the occasion, as a witness of my taking possession. On the 31st, I was invited to follow my friend Thompson to the grave: he had for some time undergone several very severe disappointments,

and laboured under much depression, when the total (and to him unexpected) failure of "Oberon's Oath" seemed quite to subdue him. He had been talking with me of some arrangements respecting the Surrey Theatre, in which it was imagined he could be of use to me; and with a view to arrange an engagement he was to call on me on Sunday the 25th: on that day he was a corpse!

At a meeting of the sub-committee, notwithstanding what had passed before the minute of re-engagement was sent to Mr. Rae and myself by Mr. Ward, I was informed that I could not keep my situation: I repeated, that if I remained at Drury-Lane, I should not manage the Surrey myself; that I was then a proprietor of Sadler's Wells Theatre, and had been so for many years, as were Messrs. King and Wroughton at the several periods of their managements of Drury-Lane. I know what was said to me *severally* by the gentlemen then governing Drury-Lane; but in council, nothing I said seemed to avail: indeed, only one or two came to discuss the subject. I reminded them that I had a right to my salary up to October, having been engaged for a year, during which I had worked hard, and was the only stage-manager who did work during the last summer. This was (as it of necessity must have been) allowed.

However aggrieved I did, and do find myself, to this hour, by such a resolution of the committee,—we parted friends, as I have before observed; and I think it but due to myself to exhibit the following additional proofs of it:—

July 30th, 1816, Stanhope-street.

"Dear Sir,

"I have been in town only last night since I first left it, and must return again to-day to Cassiobury. I mention this that you may not think me such a brute as never once to have been to see you at your theatre, of which I hear a most excellent account; and that last night was an overflowing house. May they be so constantly is my ardent wish! I assure you, I will take the earliest opportunity, when I can get to town for a day or two, to witness the success which I trust will ever attend you in this and all concerns. I hope, during the summer months, (for they have not begun yet,) that you will be enabled to give us a Saturday and Sunday at Cassiobury, when your soul and body shall be taken good care of.*

"Ever much yours, truly and faithfully,

"ESSEX."

* His lordship has a handsome chapel, which, when at Cassiobury, on a former visit, I attended.

32, Clarges-street, April 20th, 1817.

"Dear Sir,

"I have been induced to take the liberty of introducing to you the bearer of this letter, Mr. Cordell, both from a desire of rendering him a service, and from a conviction that he possesses talents to be of service to you. I once had the pleasure of seeing him perform the part of the Duke in the 'Honey Moon,' in which he appeared to me to possess the advantages of a powerful and flexible voice and countenance, and to exhibit so just a comprehension of his author, as has made me anxious ever since to witness his performance upon a London theatre. I am induced strongly to believe, that should your engagements enable you to avail yourself of his talents, that you will acquire much additional strength to your own company, and give at the same time to him a fortunate passport to the higher honours and emoluments in his profession hereafter. I beg to present my compliments to Mrs. Dibdin, and am,

"Dear Sir, your obedient servant,

"DOUGLAS KINNAIRD."

T. Dibdin, Esq. &c. &c. &c.

Afterwards, when Mr. Kinnaird wished recom-

mendations from me to Birmingham in favour of another performer, I had the pleasure of writing and procuring a very great number, which effort to oblige was thus acknowledged :—

"Dear Sir,

"This is really backing of your friends indeed: I am quite ashamed to think of the trouble I must have occasioned you. I have written to apprise the party of your kindness. With compliments to Mrs. Dibdin, I am, my dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"DOUGLAS KINNAIRD."

Pall-Mall, Thursday.

"Dear Sir,

"If you happen to have by you a spare copy of your songs in 'Pitcairn's Island,' it would be a great favour to bestow it on me. I want to make a collection of all the pieces, &c. that were produced at Drury-Lane during my meddling in management; and your piece of 'Pitcairn's Island' is the only one wanting to complete my set. Believe me

"Yours truly,

"G. LAMB."

Whitehall-yard,
Thursday, April 26, 1818.

Speaking of his Irish song, in an antecedent letter, Mr. Lamb also says,—"Do what you like with it; but worthless as it may be, I hope you will receive it as a testimony, at least, of my good-will towards you, and hearty wishes for your prosperity."

Lord Byron, I believe, left England before I left Drury-Lane. Of the last letter I had from Mr. Moore I give but a part: the passages I have omitted are much more kindly expressed than those I have copied from his friendly testimonial:—

"My dear Sir,

"On behalf of the general proprietary of Drury-Lane Theatre, of whose important interests I have the honour to be the only acting trustee, I repeat privately, what I declared publicly, in their presence, and as I felt it, under their highest approbation,—that I sincerely lament the loss of the highly cultivated talents of your hereditary genius and long practical experience, as a misfortune, in common with every individual attached to the theatre, who have avowedly benefited by your kind instructions, and manifestly profited by your fostering encouragement, in their various pursuits, in every department which has been entrusted to your

care and superintendence, the duties of which you have so honourably and so faithfully fulfilled. If my cordial wishes can advance your merits, you have them without reserve: but, I fear, I have no other means of testifying my high sense of them. If I could have imagined for a moment, that the bill for which Mr. Temple West applied to parliament to enable him to open the Surrey Theatre, would, by undesigned and unforeseen operation, have deprived Drury-Lane Theatre of your valuable services, I never would have sent him to you for that advice and instruction, the honesty and good sense of which induced Mr. West to press the undertaking and management of his theatre upon you. My dear Sir,

"Yours very sincerely and faithfully,

"P. Moore."

Drury-Lane Theatre,
Oct. 2, 1816.

Thomas Dibdin, Esq.
Surrey Theatre.

The following are extracts of a letter from Mr. Moore to the Earl of Essex:—

"My dear Lord,

"At our next meeting we shall have to determine finally on Mr. Dibdin's question,

which so long has slept. On the fullest consideration, I feel we cannot do without him, or some equally qualified person in his place; and that to attempt to do without fresh aid, would be trying an experiment, by which the concern entrusted to us may be very seriously injured, and which we are not justified in hazarding, any more than Mr. Whitbread, who was not of the profession, and could not supply any deficiency in management any more than your Lordship or myself. As to the Circus impeding Dibdin in his business here, as soon as it is once set in motion, the duties of that theatre (on the supposition I was to have a manager there) will be wholly performed by deputy; and great utility may be derived from this subordinate establishment in Dibdin's hands, and with his good disposition to Drury-Lane. I have seen wonders, as it were by magic, performed in it (the Surrey) in no time:—a regular establishment; the theatre itself, in truth, erected (*i. e.* the interior), with change and novelty of exhibition every night;—all, in the short space of five weeks, brought to perfection out of distress and ruin; which the proprietor himself positively despaired of seeing accomplished. I know also that our rivals have applied to Dibdin for aid, to write for them against the approaching season."

Farewell, Gentlemen of the sub-committee! and farewell, *pro tempore*, to Drury! I received many a kindness, during the four years I have recorded, from all its performers; and the other morning, when I was, between sleep and awake, enumerating in my mind the favours I received from the sub-committee, (favours already recorded in the last chapter in vulgar prose,) I dreamt I thus endeavoured to put them into doggrels:—

Two hundred turban'd Turks Lord BYRON gave;
MOORE gave me credit; CAPEL! let me say,
Thy portrait Memory will deep engrave
While vital circulation warm shall play:
From Lamb I gain'd a merry Irish stave
To introduce in opera, farce, or play:
While Douglas join'd his bounty, when one day
He kindly gave me—leave to go away.

My Surrey actors, oft as I disguised them
Like Turks, to Byron's truth of costume bow'd:
I paid thy bankers, Peter, and *surprised* them;
And still of Capel's *countenance* am proud:
With lines of Lamb, sung just as he advised them,
My singers have delighted many a crowd:
My feelings too, though Douglas sacrificed them,
Can thank him for the freedom he allow'd:
I mean when (guided by no sudden whim)
He gave me leave to go away from him.

By way of appendix, I have to state that we performed at Drury-Lane two hundred and

eighteen nights, the receipts of which amounted in the aggregate (without including many hundreds of pounds private box money, which I had no regular account of) to £58,000, averaging about two hundred and seventy pounds nightly; which, as two hundred guineas were reckoned the expenses of the house, left a profit of more than eleven thousand pounds for the season, independent of the sale of private boxes, freedoms, &c. From my own observation, I had always supposed the current expenses of Drury-Lane to be about £200 nightly; and when, as candidate for a lease of it, I was permitted to examine the treasury books, I found my guess correct within £6 per night. The above expenses relate only to disbursements behind the curtain, not including renters' shares, &c. &c.

Our seven best receipts (nightly receipts), taken individually, were—

Jan. 29th,	"New Way to pay Old Debts," and "My Spouse and I,"	£609	11	0
26th,	"New Way," &c. with "Harlequin and Fancy,"	608	3	0
22d,	Do. Do.	590	13	0
19th,	Do. Do.	581	6	6
15th,	Do. Do.	547	14	6
May 20th,	"Bertram," and "The Magpie,"	524	16	0
Feb. 12th,	"New Way to pay Old Debts," and "Rosina,"	522	9	0

It will be seen that all these large receipts occurred on nights of Mr. Kean's performance.

It had always been usual for the acting manager to have the privilege of distributing what nightly orders (or temporary free admissions) it might be thought necessary to give either to performers or other friends of the theatre; but the sub-committee, at one time, thinking that shareholders were entitled to such occasional privilege in preference to members of the theatre, and at another time imagining that the acting managers might possess too great an influence in the theatre,—either took the privilege from us, or appointed the before-named Mr. Warren to dole out to us a certain number; and either to give away the rest himself (for there was generally a *maximum* fixed), or, as any members of the sub-committee might direct. By remonstrating frequently, and perhaps with more warmth than a mere deputy's deputy was supposed to be entitled to do, especially when difference of rank was evidently taken into the scale,—I more than once, though unintentionally, gave great offence, in the committee-room, to a very small portion of the aggregate number; and on one occasion hastily left the room, expressing the little regret I should feel if I never entered it again. My colleague was blest with

more prudence; and although, when we were *tête-à-tête* in our own room of business, he expressed himself still more indignant than I had done, yet his anger never passed the boundary of our own door; and when, on the occasion just mentioned, he, at proper time, followed me from the committee-room to my residence in Russell-street, he excused his want of co-operation on the plea that he had a wife and children, forgetting that I was similarly situated; and he should have added, that he had eighteen pounds per week to risk by giving offence, while I had but ten.

It might be suggested, by perfectly impartial friends, that it might not be wise to quarrel about the privilege of giving orders to persons in the establishment; but that establishment consisted of between two and three hundred people, all of whom had been in the habit of looking up to the acting manager for those little courtesies, which, having in his power to bestow, enabled him frequently to distinguish those rising candidates for theatrical popularity, who were most assiduous and attentive in their duties, by a kindness of much more consequence than its nominal value, when given as a mark of professional approbation. The leading performers, whose established characters and talents placed them above

these *petites douceurs*, and who rather claimed them as a sort of right, (independently of their agreed-on privileges,) either felt indignant at our apparently withholding them without cause, or professed incredulity as to our want of power to oblige them: and where, at last, was this really important privilege placed? Why, in the hands of a gentleman, who, however respectable in the counting-house, or at the head of the money-takers and their assistants, was no more a competent judge of the dramatic government of the theatre, or how far the proper distribution of favours might help to support it, than many others, who have, since his time, held higher situations there. If a performer neglected the duties of his situation, we had ample power to punish by fine or discharge; and no one, not even of the committee, disputed or wished to participate in this unpleasant privilege: we were fully welcome to the *onus* of it, and might do as many disagreeable things as we pleased; but popularity was thought too dangerous a qualification to be possessed by the sub-managers of the sub-committee: our way therefore was always up-hill, with this additional drawback,—that though we *climbed*, there was no possibility of our *rising*. I have still the happiness to say, that throughout my half ad-

ministration, as well as during my three years of promptership which preceded it, I never had a serious difference with any one in the establishment, nor left an individual who did not profess, at any rate, a wish to see me again in office. Poor Raymond, who was appointed to the stage management after my late co-adjutor, soon sank under the weight of eternal and complicated committee conference, instruction, explanation, and undetermination. It was necessary to hold correspondence daily, nightly, and all night with them: he received his death stroke while in the very act of writing a long and utterly useless letter (on some points never to be cleared up) to an active member of the committee, who told me, at the deceased manager's funeral, that I was the only man qualified to conduct the theatre at last. *Quelle bonté!*

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S S... THE TANJORE ... MAHAL.

CHAP. VI.

1816.

"And one that hath had losses."—*Much ado about Nothing.*

Retrospection of Mrs. Garrick — Importunities of Mr. West to induce me to take his theatre—Reasons why I should not have taken it, and reasons why I did not know those reasons—Waterloo-bridge—Counteraction of its expected benefit to my theatre by the sudden and literal intervention of another—Rent—Inordinate price of insurance—Extraordinary expense of nearly rebuilding the interior of the theatre—Liberality of my landlord—The theatre—Performers — Artists — Comic applications — Mr. Kean — Mr. Incledon—Mrs. Billington—Madame Storace—Her sudden indisposition, and lamented dissolution.

THERE was certainly something prophetic in the caution given me by Mrs. Garrick respecting the Circus,—but one would imagine I was a doomed man: I ought never to have taken that theatre, as events have since proved; but had I taken, during the period of my lease, only ten pounds per night more than I did, which a public, who professed to be so pleased with it

under my management, might well have afforded me, I should have been deemed the cleverest and most correct man (in *minor* matters) existing, without meriting an atom of such distinction more than I do at this moment. Success with Englishmen, more than with all other men, is talent, knowledge, virtue.

My father was the first manager of the Royal Circus. I became manager, as we have seen, for Mr. Elliston, when he new-named it the Surrey Theatre; again (at the period I am going to write about) I managed it myself, and at this date (August 1826) my brother is director there: it is strange, too, that, successively, my father, myself, my brother, and then myself again, should have become managers of the Surrey and Sadler's Wells. With respect to the Surrey, I sought it not:—

> Rebellion lay in my way, and I found it.

At the moment (as no doubt the evil one is always on the watch) when I felt unpleasantly situated at the ever-varying opinions of my ever-varying masters, the quintumvirate,—I saw an advertisement in the papers inviting competitors for a lease of the Surrey Theatre. The very natural idea of preferring to be *aut Cæsar, aut nullus*,—the first man in a village sooner than

half of the sixth man in Vinegar-yard,—and rather the converse of

> Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven,—

induced me to write to certain rustically-named solicitors,—Pool and Greenfield, (rural but not refreshing,) in Gray's-inn, to ask the price of the article; which, when I heard, I disapproved: but then I had a friend near the theatre, who told me I should never want pecuniary assistance to carry it on; but still I "liked it not;" and then Mr. West came behind the scenes (on whose power of admission I know not) at Drury-Lane, and insisted I was the only man to whom he should like to let the theatre, because his father had built it that my father should manage it; that I should have it on liberal terms; and that it should shake off the nick-name, by which he meant the distinction Mr. Elliston had lately given it, and that the Circus should be "itself again." He further represented that there was a new bridge from the Strand to the Obelisk in a very forward state, and that the treasures of El Dorado were brass tokens, when compared to the wealth that awaited me in the county of Surrey. If I went into Drury-Lane green-room, Mr. West was there; if I went to the manager's room, he was there; if I went home, he was there:

it was little matter whether my way lay north, south, or east,—turn to which point I would, I was pretty sure to face the West; till at last, the new bridge,—the successes I had contributed to in the Surrey for others,—the immense profits realized at Astley's by my pantomime of "The High-mettled Racer,"—and the immense things I was to do for myself, — conjointly induced me to take the said Surrey Theatre, on terms hereafter to be named, without knowing or reflecting that the immediate neighbouring population surrounding the Obelisk in St. George's-fields, may be divided into three parts: of which one-third are living within certain rules, which proscribe their admission to the theatre; one-third are living in the odour of sanctity, which proscribes their entering the tents of the wicked ones, unless they can do it with a free admission; and then they must study how to go, without danger of being discovered and impeached by the godly: the third-third may be subdivided into three more; one of which one-third go to a theatre, but never pay for their admission, and will wait weeks and months for the chance of an order; a second-third of the above-named third-third are in a state of poverty, which will not permit them to pay, or they would; and who, not knowing any mode of obtaining free

admission, or not being able to dress decently if they had one, never go at all: the third-third of the above-named last third, if they happen to be play-going people, are to be divided between the three transpontine minor theatres, amounting to a twenty-seventh part of the neighbourhood, who perhaps go once a year. These subdivided subdivisions would seem to promise but a sorry harvest: all this I knew nothing about, though in better times I had been on the ground before.

When I engaged in the Surrey, I looked for but one, and that a most dangerous competitor, namely, Astley; and I knew that great exertion must be used in a fair race with him; for that a good season in one year at both theatres had perhaps never been known; but generally, when one house succeeded, the other was depressed; their luck being like the barometer toy of the weather-house; when one was in, the other was out. How much worse then must matters prove, when, what I neither suspected, foresaw, or heard of,—a third theatre raised its head under a patronage which would appear to defy all rivalry! and *hinc illæ lachrymæ!* And again, as if nothing should be wanting to ruin the nightly money market, a custom had insensibly obtained, for which they give credit to the folly of a Surrey manager long before my time, of giving a certain number of orders to every house

or shop where a play-bill was conspicuously exhibited, and that very frequently; and it is certain that at one period, when not in possession of its present managers, the Cobourg Theatre sent out six hundred large bills weekly to shops, &c. for which each shop received three double orders, *i. e.* admitting two persons each per week; making in the total thirty-six hundred people admitted *gratis* weekly, in addition to proprietors' personal friends, performers' orders, individuals' freedoms, &c. &c. I knew not what cards I was playing my game with, nor did I follow this example; therefore it was not to be wondered at that few would pay at my house, when so many could repeatedly amuse themselves, without a shilling's expense, at another. My rent was one thousand a year; and Mr. West was, besides, to have one third of the profits, without sharing in the risk to be run in obtaining them. The whole interior of the theatre required substantial repair: there was not a scene, nor a frame to hang one on: the dressing-places, and even stairs, had been pulled down by the last tenants: there was not a chandelier nor a candlestick: the estimate of what it was to cost me to supply these deficiencies was stated by respectable men at about two thousand pounds; it cost me four, before I could draw up my curtain.

I was to insure the building to the amount of nine thousand pounds, adding three more for my own property in the house. The offices, which, since the fires at Covent-Garden, Drury-Lane, the Circus, Astley's, and other play-houses, had become uncommonly cautious respecting theatres, (many would not insure me at all,) charged me at rates amounting to three hundred and sixty pounds per annum; to which add taxes, &c. and before we come to the *minutiæ* of the stage, I think it will be allowed I was rated tolerably high.

The house itself is, without exception, (at least in my opinion) the best-constructed both for audience and actors in or near the metropolis: there is no part of the theatre from whence you may not see, nor any from whence you may not hear with the greatest facility: the audience part of the house is commodious, and as spacious, except in height, as either Covent-Garden or Drury-Lane: the stage, its offices, green-room, dressing-rooms, and wardrobes on the first scale of convenience. From the twenty-third of May till the first of July, I had to rebuild and furnish all behind the curtain; to remove the horse-ride; construct a pit; alter, re-embellish, and furnish all in front of it: twenty-eight new chandeliers, a new curtain, and, in

short, every thing essential, was to be provided: a company, a band, painters, and other artists, with stage carpenters, to be engaged; and, what gave me the greatest anxiety, three new pieces, with comic songs, &c. &c. were to be written.

As soon as it was known I intended to open the Surrey, (which did not happen till my abrupt dismissal by the committee left me no choice as to what steps I should pursue,) the applications for engagements were almost incredibly numerous. I rose at five or six in the morning; was in the theatre (close to which I slept) till nine, writing and superintending the workmen; went to Drury-Lane at ten; stayed till three; worked at the Surrey till five; was again on the stage at Drury-Lane at the drawing-up of the curtain; and, without the slightest injury to my health, continued a similar course of labour till the 28th of June, when Drury-Lane closed.

As it was near the commencement of benefit-time at Drury-Lane when I began to turn my thoughts to the Surrey, there was no business for me to do but what related to the expiring season, which wanted little more than my presence at the hours I have mentioned; for as I was not to remain after the 28th, of course my presence was not required for the purpose of

making any arrangements for the ensuing season: had it not been so, I should have consigned the care of the Surrey Theatre to some competent person, (and many eligible managers offered,) and taken no more active part in conducting it than would have cost me an hour a day; for my idea in taking the house was, that I might have an asylum to which I could honourably retire whenever circumstances at Drury-Lane made it necessary. I was only engaged by the committee yearly; and there was no foreseeing, from year to year, when the ins might go out, and the outs come in again.

At last, finding I must go to work, to work I went seriously and comically, and in both ways I may say truly, *con amore*. I wrote the story of a ballet dance with which to draw up my curtain, and Mr. Byrne most liberally (from old friendship) volunteered to superintend its coming out for me, without charge, the only condition he insisted on. One artist offered to paint me a proscenium drop (as we call the painted cloth which falls between the acts); another insisted on giving me a week's assistance; but, with the exception of Mr. Byrne's trouble, I accepted nothing. Mr. Kean asked me to engage two of his relatives, who stayed three seasons with me: I engaged a son and three daughters of brother

Cecil; brother Charles offered me a piece gratuitously; half the Drury-Lane band, several of their principal female dancers, with many actors, solicited engagements, as well as almost all the corps of which I had been manager at the Surrey for Elliston. Thinking the best way to ensure attraction would be to deserve it, I commenced with a company which, though afterwards much improved, but then labouring under the disadvantage of being almost all strangers to each other, performed, on the first night, with a precision often unattained in the "great grand" theatres: —in fact, they were all determined to do their best; and, as Sheridan justly says,

> When they *do* agree,
> Their unanimity is wonderful!

The painters employed for many weeks to execute the mass of scenery wanted, and entirely to decorate the theatre itself, were no less than ten well-known artists, comprising Greenwood, Wilson, H. Wilson, Luppino, Whitmore, Genta, Wilkins, H. Smith, Kirby, and Meyrick. The band consisted of two-and-twenty select performers, led by Mr. Woodarch, of Drury-Lane; and at his return to Drury, by that modest and meritorious conductor and composer, the late Mr. Sanderson. Among the band were Erskine, Liebe,

Howship, Nicholson, Schmidt, (late principal trumpet in His Majesty's band,) Mully, Fisher, Holmes, Zerbin, &c. &c. The stage performers, exclusively of supernumerary aid, consisted generally of thirty-five men and thirty-two females: among the former, in the course of my management were Mess. Incledon, Fitzwilliams, T. P. Cooke, Bengough, Decamp, Huntley, Grant, Leonard, Short, Huddart, Davidge, Giroux, Bologna, Kirby, Lee, Doré, Peters, Ridgway, a capital *corps de ballet*, and eight of the best chorus-singers from the winter theatres: among the ladies were Mrs. Mountain, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Chatterley, Miss Taylor, Mrs. Fitzwilliams, Mrs. Orger, Mrs. Egerton, Mrs. Brooks, Miss S. Booth, Mrs. Gomersal, Miss Tree, Miss Macaulay, Mrs. Davis, Miss Wheatley, Miss Bence, three Misses Pitt, Misses Simpson, Bologna, Hart, Holland, &c. &c. The new wardrobe was not only superb, but correct as to costume; and for my Eastern spectacles, I found Lord Byron's drawings invaluable. If I had room to insert a fiftieth part of the whimsical applications I received for engagements, I have no doubt that they would raise a hearty laugh; but then many of them are so very absurd, that unless I could fix some mark of authenticity upon them, John Bull, in the keenness of his observations, would

suspect me of having manufactured them for the occasion. The following, addressed to Lady Caroline Lamb, having been enclosed to me by her ladyship, will need no better testimony of its being genuine; there is therefore no occasion to give the writer's name:

And now there's "Madam" enough for you.

"*My Lady,*

"I Some time back took the Great liberty of applying to your *Ladiship*, to have the kindness to patronize my Sons benefit at the Royal Coburg Theatre; and your *Ladiship* had the kindness to say that your *Ladiship* had patronized so many, that your *Ladiship* could not comply with my request just then. My son, *my Lady*, has been in Scotland since and succeeded very well; his talent is not yet known in London *my Lady*, as he has never yet had an oppertunity to show it: I hope *your Ladiship* will forgive this liberty, and trust my motive for again truebling *your Ladiship* will meet with your *Ladiship's* pardon. I am the widow, *my Lady*, of an old officer, and have four children totelly unprovided for. I am in a little way of business, *my Lady*, but trade is so bad that it does not support us. My present request, *my Lady*, is, if it meets with

your *Ladiship's* approbation, to beg your *Ladiship* would have benevolent kindness to give my son a few lines to Mr. Thos. Dibdin, maneger of the Surrey Theatre, to employ him, from your *Ladiship's* recommendation. I am confident of success, and Mr. Dibdin would Be the makeing of my son. I can give your *Ladiship* a refferance to the war office for my self and sons character, *my Lady,* and likewise to Mr. Beverly, maneger of the Regency-Theatre, or Mr. Wm. Barrymore, if my request should meet with your *Ladiship's* approbation. I most ernestly beg your *Ladiship* will grant my request; it will ever be remembered by my self and son with gratitude.

"I am, *my Lady,* your *Ladiship's* most Devoted and Grateful Servt.

"P.S. My Son, *my Lady,* will take the liberty of waiting your *Ladiship's* answer. I have taken the liberty of Enclosing mr. mason's letter to your *Ladiship,* the maneger whom he was with last, *my Lady.*"

As the originals of what follow are in the hands of the publisher, and carry their own authenticity on the faces of them, I cannot re-

sist giving two or three very rich specimens of the *ardor ludendi*:—

"Sir,

"I have took the liberty of Troubling you with those few lines, to Ask you if you have an Engagement Vacant in Your Company. To Let You know My Accomplishments, I am Active and Ready, Quick at my Lessons, And further, Sir, the Cheif which i Can Play is Norval in 'Douglas,' and Lothair in the 'Miller and his Men;' And have no Objection of being Usefull at the Sides as a Pheasant, &c. As My Inclination for treading the Stage is So Strong, That i am like Lothair, 'Without the Stage my life is But a Blank,' my Services is Useless to Others and Miserable to Myself. And further, i have to State, i am Very Expeditious at Writing Plays, and have no Objection of Supplying you with a Melodrame Every 3 Months free of Expence; and i have one now in my Possession Which i have lately Wrote, Entitled The (Assassins of the forest,) in 5 Acts, Which, sir, is yours, if you think Proper to Engage Me."

By *Pheasants* it is pretty evident the gentleman meant *Peasants*: he is not quite singular in

his orthographic error. I remember seeing a manuscript musical scene of "Oscar and Malvina," in which the copyist had converted "Chorus of Bards and Peasants," into "*Chorus of Birds and Pheasants*." In the part of Whimsiculo in "The Cabinet," the saucy valet is made to ask, "What! do you take me for a post, a porter, or a running footman?" Imagine my surprise, when, at the first rehearsal, Mr. Fawcett read from his manuscript character, through a mistake of the copyist, arising entirely from my unintelligible autography,—"What! do you take me for a pot of porter or a running footman?" Again, a stage direction in "The Birth-Day" should say, that Jack Junk "runs to embrace her (Mrs. Moral), and misses his aim;" instead of which was written—"runs to embrace her, and kisses her arm." I could mention many other whimsical errors having birth from the same cause, but shall intrude no further than to state that Mr. Simmons, (father of the talented little actor of that name, who so many years delighted the town at Covent-Garden,) being a receiver of tickets and orders at the theatre, was so convinced of my inability to write a plain and legible hand, that he actually, one evening, refused an order of mine because he could read it. I have another application commencing with "I

am a salamander and sing comic songs." The following is from a celebrated *siffleur*:—

"Sir,

"I Take the Liberty of Inclosing a few Lines, to Inform you that I am a Beautyfull Whistler If you Please to Give Me one Trial on the Stage.

"Sir, I Remain your Obt. Set.

"For Answear."

The next from a very pretty Irish lady:—

"Sir,

"Pardon the Liberty I take in writeing to you, as being to you a Totle Strainger, and likewise in London and not Knowing any Theatreal performer in Town, I hope Sir this will *plade* an excuse, I therefore am induced to take this metherd of offering myself to ingage with you, to take any Part you may be pleased to give me. I should be happy to have an intervew with you on this subject, should you be in wants of such an actress; a Line address to me to be Left at Mr. harwoods, Circulateing Librey, No. 21, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, shall be immediately attended to by

"Sir, your most obt. Humbel Servent."

The last but one I shall offer, from a very promising, and at the same time diffident young author, is also *verbatim et literatim*:—

"Sir,

"Allow me, with the utmost respect and becoming fortitude, the privilege, as well as the honour, though an entire stranger, of soliciting your attention towards the enclosed. A self-interrogation had long perplexed my mind, concerning whether I was capable of undertaking the difficult, as well as resolute part, of an author:—many proofs, I imagined, announced me incompetent, and yet others appeared convincing me to the contrary. The generality of mankind are too apt in imagining themselves exulting in a state of future prosperity; instead of employing resignation to make themselves content in whatever wretched capacity the precarious will of Providence may judge necessary. Of the former disposition am I; therefore, I threw aside every obstacle, and consigned my all to chance. Emboldened by every favourable idea on my own side, I commenced the present production; nor were my exertions reluctantly given, but indefatigable in its progress, though I was continually teazed by voices forbidding such

an undertaking: my last consideration, is that of receiving any emolument from the drama, but candidly, if I may employ the expression, the smiles of aspiring Fame! I shall now conclude, with humbly soliciting for an insurmountable favour on your part, which is, to use your never-failing talent, in whatever situation you think proper, if you suppose the enclosed worthy of such noble indulgence! but if it should so happen as to be entirely rejected, which I shall know by not observing any announcement of its representation in your bills, why, I shall make myself perfectly contented, as I am most rigidly assured that I could not have entrusted any dramatic attempt whatever into the hands of a man more zealous in wishing to give satisfaction than yourself; and therefore, without any apology, allow me to repeat boldly, what I would wish to be:—An Object worthy of your Regard."

June 25th, 1818.

The critique of Sir Lucius O'Trigger on the letter of Mrs. Malaprop is certainly very applicable to this note, in which there are words "arbitrarily pressed in the service, which would get their *Habeas Corpus* from any court in Christendom."

The following concluding note from a once

celebrated French dancer, is worthy a place among some of Smollett's best slip-slop epistles: it is addressed to *Mr. T. Dibdin, Esq.*—

"Madam ****'s Respectful compliment to Mr. and Mrs. Dibdin, and will be mutch oblight to him if e will favour us with an order for next week, as she as not had the Pleasur of seeing your theatres this four years Past; and at the same time will recomend the barer, Mr. ****, to you for an engagment at your theatre, as it is is wish to serve you as far as lay in is Power: is Brothe is Engaged at Mr. Astleys Theatre for the season now comming on, and if you have a vacancy you can Place the barer in, e will make im self as usefull as e can to serve you, and think e will sute you.

"N.B. If you have no vacancy in your own theatre, be so kind as to Recomend im to your Broth* for Sadlers Wels.

Having finished with undenominated applicants, (each of whom may be said to be *sui generis,*) I shall come to names, carrying some interest with them. I have already mentioned engaging two relatives of the talented writer of this note:—

* *Broth*, I presume, stands here for *brother*.

"Dear Dibdin,

"The bearer is a very old and particular friend of mine: he is exceedingly clever in the old men, sings, and is of general utility. I am vain enough to believe you will not think the less of him, from the introduction of

"Your very sincere friend,

"EDMUND KEAN."

I have mentioned Mr. Incledon in my list of performers. I had always heard, and often seen, that it was not an easy matter for a manager to content him, while engaged, no matter on what terms. I have great pleasure in saying he performed at the Surrey, at three different periods under my management; during which times we not only had not a single misunderstanding, but, at the conclusion of his second engagement, he volunteered to perform two additional nights gratuitously; and after the third, came to town, at his own expense, from some distance, to sing for my benefit, without any other recompense than the pleasure it gave him. He often asserted that I was the only manager he was not obliged to quarrel with. Having arranged an engagement with him at the Surrey, and proposed the part of Hawthorn for his *début*, I annex his reply:—

Exeter, Monday, 4 o'clock.

"My dear Tom,

"As I yesterday sang one hymn and two anthems in the parish church of Silverton, six miles from this city, I did not arrive here before two o'clock; therefore I shall write again to-morrow, when I have more time. My benefit is on Friday, I shall set out for London on Saturday morning, sleep on the road that night, and reach town on Sunday evening. I am happy to find you intend to act 'Love in a Village,' and must own I would rather open in that than in Macheath, as I fear I shall require some rest before I perform so arduous a character. Another reason is, that in Hawthorn I can introduce some of my best songs; but at all events, I will write to you again to-morrow. Mrs. Incledon presents her love and respects to Mrs. Dibdin.

"Dear Tom, yours most truly,

"C. Incledon."

There is another deceased warbler of a more interesting sex, from whose fair hand a memorial may not be unacceptable; and if it should not gratify the reader, it still will be flattering to the vanity of the writer, to have it known that he was always high in the good opinion of the lady,

who, after having twice visited the Surrey, volunteered to engage the Lord Mayor of that day to give his name and public patronage to the theatre on some convenient night:—

"Mrs. Billington presents her compliments to Mr. Dibdin, and begs him to accept her best thanks for the free card he so politely sent her, and which she meant to have again availed herself of before this, but her health does not permit her to be much out in the night air. Mrs. B. is not certain whether the Lord Mayor has yet been at Mr. Dibdin's theatre, or whether any time has been appointed: if his lordship requires a hint, Mrs. B. will take an early opportunity of jogging his memory: he is so full of business, that his time must of course be taken up; but he promised to attend the theatre, and he is known to be a man of his word. Mrs. Billington desires her best compliments to Mrs. Dibdin, and begs it to be considered, she is anxious that what she had the pleasure of undertaking for Mr. Dibdin, should be fulfilled."

Fulham, Nov. 26.

More last words!

A fourth! start eyes! why do you shew me this?

Why? because I had mislaid it at the time I mentioned the birth of my eldest boy; and because I entertained a still higher regard for the next deceased singer I am about to introduce (and she for me and mine) than for either of the preceding:—

Herne-Hill Cottage, October 30th, 1816.

"Dear Dibdin,

"I have this instant received your favour, and congratulate you both on the birth of a son, whom I hope you will be more fortunate with than you were with your dear daughters. I am extremely happy to hear Mrs. D. is so well; give my love to her. We arrived here last night from Brighton; and, be assured, we should not have passed so near Betchworth without calling on our friends, but feared, on Mrs. Dibdin's account, we should only be in your way. We daily expected the pleasure of your coming to Brighton: shall be at home the whole month, and shall hope to see you. Our beds are always kept aired, so you can never come *mal à propos*. We tried to look for your cottage on the road, and, though at a great distance, I fancied we saw it. I assure you, we were sorry to stay two hours and a half (to rest our horses) at Reigate—so near, and not to be

able to get at you: a pair of wings would have been very acceptable. We called on Mr. Harris at Brighton, who was polite enough to express great satisfaction at our attention, and we were much gratified to see him look so much better. You know he was always a great favourite of ours. He rather seemed in expectation of seeing you there before he returned from Uxbridge. Adieu, my good friends! my mother, and even the servants, rejoice to hear of Mrs. Dibdin's doing well. All join in best regards, with

"Yours sincerely,

"A. Storace."

The last time I saw Madame Storace, it was arranged that a large party, who were named, should dine together about ten days afterwards, and that we should go to Vauxhall Gardens in the evening. Within that short interval, poor Madame Storace was taken dangerously ill, and died on the day appointed for our intended merriment:—*Sic transit, &c. &c.*

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S MAHAL. *

CHAP. VII.

1816—17—18—19.

> " Will the line
> Stretch to the crack of doom ? "—*Shakspeare.*

More of my offspring—" Peasant's Picnic"—" Sicilian" —" Chevy Chace"—" Who 's the Murderer ?"—" Slaves in Barbary"—Death of Mrs. C. Dibdin—Production of " Harlequin in the Obelisk"—" Waggery in Wapping"—" Three times Three"—" Pedlar's Acre"—" Love, Hatred, and Revenge"—" Silver Swan"—" Magic Grape"—" Italian Wife"—" Red Man and Savage"—" 5, 6, 7"—" Trick for Trick"—" Three Paddies"—" Don Giovanni"—" Constantine and Valeria"—Visit from Talma—Bring out " The Fatal Island"—" Waterloo Bridge"—" Harlequin Patchwork"—" Vicar of Wakefield"—" At all in the Ring"— " Zuma"—Mr. Harris—" Christmas Tale"—" Touchstone" —" Knights of the Lion"—" Tom Jones"—" Zapolya"— " Sir Launcelot Greaves"—" Duke and Devil"—" Khouli Khan"—" Rather too bad"—" How to write an Opera"— " Humphrey Clinker"—" Roderick Random"—" Ferdinand Count Fathom"—" Red Riding-hood"—" Invisible Witness"—O. Smith's " Lolonois"—" Sea-Serpent"—" Lucretia" —" Murder'd Guest"—Honourable testimonials—" Azim" —" Scraps"—" Reprobate"—" The Heart of Mid Lothian."

I OPENED the Surrey Theatre on the 1st of July, 1816, with a comic address spoken by Mrs.

Dibdin ; a dance by my friend Byrne, announced as " Housewarming, or the Peasant's Picnic ;" an operatic melo-drame, called " The Sicilian ;" and the historical romance of " Chevy Chace ;" all of which, though written on the spur of the moment, were heartily welcomed. I purchased from the late Mr. Oxberry an altered obsolete drama, which I again altered, put into verse, and brought out under the title of " Who 's the Murderer ?" My next production was " Slaves in Barbary, or the Bombardment of Algiers ;" on the success of which I put into rehearsal a comic pantomime, which was afterwards very effective, as " The Dog and Duck, or Harlequin in the Obelisk." Mrs. Charles Dibdin, the wife of my brother, dined with us at the first rehearsal of this pantomime, and was to have dined with us again on the day of its production, to witness the success she prophesied would attend it ; but, though very few days were to intervene, she was a corpse before the time arrived, leaving my brother with eight children, who, in common with their widowed father, had to lament the loss of one of the best of wives and mothers. Three children had preceded their mother to the " narrow house ;" and one remarkably fine youth of eighteen, who was apprenticed, as an artist, to Mr. Wilson, in the painting-room of

the Surrey Theatre, has since followed her, leaving three boys and four girls to console their father.

The season at the Surrey had commenced very well; but early in the autumn, an unprecedented succession of heavy rainy weather constantly inundated us to an excess, which (though we thus literally had an *overflowing* house every evening) kept every thing in the shape of profit away from us. The succeeding winter months were still more severe: intense frost pervaded the metropolis; the poor were hourly crying out for food; and in one week I gave six charity benefits, which I grieve to say were very indifferently attended. I next purchased a French piece from Mr. Goldsmith, of the Antigallican newspaper, which, when altered and adapted with new songs, &c. became a very great favourite in the shape of "Waggery in Wapping, or King Charles in the Royal Oak." The sub-committee had refused this piece, when, at Mr. Goldsmith's request, I offered it to Drury-Lane: its success amply repaid my trouble in bringing it out at my own house. Some years after another translation appeared at Covent-Garden, as "King Charles the Second's Merry Days;" and, what is rather singular, Miss M. Tree performed the same character in it her

piece. Another Harle-

quinade, called "Pedlar's Acre, or Harlequin in Lambeth;" and a splendid melo-dramatic romance on the plan of the long since produced "Faustus," bearing the title of "The Silver Swan;" with a drama named "Love, Hatred, and Revenge," and the comic burletta of "Three times Three, or Boys, Girls, and Guardians,"—closed the list of my productions during the first season, which concluded at the end of the Christmas week.

I re-opened on Easter Monday, 1817, with an improved company, additional scenery, chandeliers, (the latter, four in number, presented to me by my landlord) and further aid in a most excellent band, and other expensive matters. A third new pantomime, "The Magic Grape, or Harlequin Wine-merchant," added another feather to our patchwork cap. At Drury-Lane I had spoken to the sub-committee respecting Mr. Milman's tragedy of "Fazio:" there were various opinions on it, and the matter dropped. I now curtailed it in some degree, to render it practicable for the Surrey; and having taken some little pains, during rehearsals and readings, with a very talented young actress of the name of Taylor,—her unwearied attention, and the ability she displayed, throughout her performance of the part of Bianca, tended to raise the character of our dramatic corps very consider[illegible] was

Huntley's Fazio less conducive to the success of the play, which afterwards was produced at Bath: to the theatre there the credit was instantly given of first introducing "Fazio" to the public, and to the notice of Covent-Garden managers. I wrote for our opening also the romance of "The Red Man and the Savage," which I took from a tale published in the European Magazine. My burletta of "Five, Six, Seven, or Pay me my Wages;"—"Trick for Trick;"—and "The Three Paddies," followed; but the great hit of the season was "Don Giovanni," which burlesque laid the ground-work for innumerable Giovannis in London, Dublin, and every-where else. I saw Mozart's opera on a Tuesday—(one of the band of the King's Theatre whispered me from the orchestra, as I sat in the pit, "You come here to take something away with you!") I went home, set my scene-painters and myself to work, and called a rehearsal for the following Monday. I had finished the first act late on the Saturday night, when Raymond came in and supped with me, and we read it together at five in the morning. As I did not write on Sunday, I had to compose the second act on Monday morning, so as to meet the performers at one P.M.; and for the first time, not being quite ready for the appointed moment, I requested

another hour; at the expiration of which, I read them the piece complete; and on Monday, May 12th, it commenced a run of more than one hundred nights. The burlesque play-bill announcing this extravaganza, led much to its celebrity, and has proved a model for many others. Wishing to give this bagatelle as much publicity as possible, I asked Mr. Miller, a very good fellow of a bookseller (which is saying much), to give me thirty-five guineas for it: this he objected to, but offered to publish it, jointly with me, at his own risk; *i.e.* share the profits, if any, with me; and, if any, pay all the loss. Though I never preferred this mode for many reasons of my own, I acceded to it in this instance,—and, strange to tell! my half of the profits, at the end of the season, amounted to exactly the sum I had asked for the whole, viz. thirty-five guineas; and Mr. Miller then gave me thirty-five more for my half of the copyright. I next altered Miss Joanna Baillie's tragedy of "Constantine Palæologus," and produced it as a melo-drame, with the title of "Constantine and Valeria." Sanderson's music, and the style in which the choruses were got up, rendered great assistance to this piece, during the run of which, I had the pleasure of a visit from the celebrated Monsieur Talma, who

expressed his astonishment at so much effect being produced in a minor theatre: the correctness of the costume, both as to scenery and dresses, he very much admired, as well as the acting of Huntley, Miss Taylor, and several others. I had a private room fitted up, and a handsome collation with fruit, tea, and coffee, for the reception of him and his party, who were introduced to the green-room, where the whole company, attendants, and soldiery, to the amount of more than one hundred persons, in the splendid dresses of "Constantine and Valeria," arranged in the most effective way, stood ready to receive the gratified, and, I believe, much surprised chief of the Gallic drama, whom, taking by the hand, I led forward, and thus introduced to the assembled company:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"Among the numerous distinguished personages your able and zealous exertions have attracted, the presence of no visiter has given me more heartfelt gratification than the favour done us by Monsieur Talma, whom I have now the honour of presenting to you, and whose name, though a synonyme for first-rate genius and talent, is still more endeared to us by the hospitality and kindness he has ever accorded to those of our professional brethren who have had the happiness to be introduced to him, at Paris.

"Monsieur Talma,

"In having the pleasure to present the collected artists of [illegible] you see an assemblage of ladies [illegible] in the cause they so powerfully

serve has raised this theatre to unprecedented respectability. Mr. Sheridan has said, 'where actors do agree, their unanimity is wonderful:' and the harmony which exists here, gives me reason to style this less a company than a family—a family, who are as proud as myself to see you within these walls; who all regret the shortness of your stay will not allow you to witness a greater variety of those efforts, which have obtained us the sanction of that public, who will appreciate us still more for the honour your notice has conferred on us."

M. Talma appeared much affected with the warmth of his reception, and replied to this effect:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"I cannot find words, in my confined knowledge of the English language, to express my gratitude for the way in which I have been here, and every where received, in this country. I only wish I might have the pleasure of meeting you in Paris, to show my sense of feeling for your kindness."

M. Talma then proceeded to view the stage and its arrangements, was afterwards re-conducted to his box, and at his departure repeated his extreme satisfaction at the whole of his evening's entertainment.

On the day when (having been apprised of his intended visit) I enclosed Monsieur Talma tickets for his party, he replied,—

"Sir,

"Allow me to return you my most grateful thanks for the honour [illegible] done

me in sending cards of admission to your theatre, which I shall have great pleasure in visiting.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

"TALMA."

June 3d, Brunet's Hotel.
T. Dibdin, Esq.

My following productions this season were the romance of "The Fatal Island;" the burletta spectacle of "Waterloo Bridge," first performed on the day of that superb and stupendous effort of art being opened to the public, and honoured by His Majesty's pedestrian transit over it; a compiled pantomime, called "Harlequin Patchwork;"—a very successful burletta or opera founded on Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield;" a spectacle combining ballet, burletta, and farce, under the title of "The Queen of Golconda;" and a bagatelle which I wrote for Mr. Decamp, called "At All in the Ring."

During this season a gentleman, not personally known to me, enclosed me a number of either "The Literary Gazette" or "Chronicle," containing the translation of a French story which he recommended as a subject for the Surrey. As I had received a hint that Covent- [illegible] I immediately went

to work, and wrote one from the story in question, which brought me once more into correspondence with my dear old master Mr. Harris. To save time in negociation, he invited me to Uxbridge, where I carried my manuscript; and while waiting in Mr. Harris's library to be announced, took up a newspaper, which contained, by odd coincidence, the very story of the piece I had in my pocket, and this story marked by Mr. Harris's pen as "a good subject for a drama." On his entrance, he said he had intended to recommend it me; his surprise therefore may be guessed when he saw my opera, which he sportively said was a proof that "great wits jump." The piece (produced afterwards as "Zuma,") was consequently half accepted before he read it, which in a day or two he did, and sent it me with some hints for alteration; and, ever on the *qui vive*, when once a dramatic subject was in agitation, he very soon after wrote :—

Belmont, Friday, Nov. 7th.

"My dear Sir,

"The many failures we have had this season make me the more anxious to secure from all danger your forthcoming piece, of which I have such high expectation; but much as you

well know, must depend on the quality of the music. Do, pray, tell me in what state is it now? I remember, when I read the piece, I thought there was scarcely enough of the vocal in it, and yet I know its great interest should not be overlaid with sing-song. I wish much you would send me the piece in its present state, and, as I hope, with all the songs, &c. &c. completely finished; and if you could get me a few of the airs copied with the music, for my daughter Fanny to play to me, I should like it much. How are you going on with Braham? does he work kindly with you? he is worth a hundred others. I presume you know you will have a very clever girl from the Liverpool Theatre for your young Peruvian.

"Yours most truly,

"T. Harris."

Mr. Harris's ill health obliging him rather suddenly to go to the sea-side, his next was dated

Brighton, 3, South Parade.

"My dear Dibdin,

"I have been waiting most impatiently for the copy of our new opera, and am

truly sorry to find the cause of the delay;* but you have long known the nature of all the people you have to deal with, and must arm yourself with patience accordingly; and then, rely on it, their joint exertions will amply repay you. In the mean time, I am very happy to hear that the piece altogether is very highly approved by all the parties concerned in it. I see that in the Drury-Lane oratorios they have introduced that much hackneyed old air of 'My Lodging is on the Cold Ground,' which is quite as well known as 'God save the King:' yet it met with more applause than all the Mozarts, Paesiellos, &c. &c. put together; and so in 'Guy Mannering,' the Scots song introduced by Braham has done more for the *prodigious* attraction of the piece than all the rest. We have so many instances of the like kind, that I have it at heart very much that, in the last act, Braham may have one of that sort, and Kitty Stephens one also. I remember a most beautiful air of Mazzinghi's in Cobb's 'Ramah Droog,' begin-

* The delay arose from the old custom of writing almost every song three or four times over, till it suited a situation or a melody approved of by the respective singers, whether or not in harmony with the interests of the story, or the general texture of the piece.

ning 'Happy were my Days,' &c.; it never failed to electrify the audience, and was a great support to the piece. If Braham, or rather Kitty had it, with appropriate words, its success would be certain. Pray let me hear from you soon, and believe me

"Ever yours truly,

"T. HARRIS.

"P.S. What would Leoni, in 'The Duenna,' have done, but that Linley and Sheridan had good sense and taste enough to give him favourite and well-known old popular airs?"

A performer of some eminence in "Zuma" seriously advised me, as a great interest was to be created by the discovery and effects (supposed to be magical) of the Peruvian bark, to write a character of a Jesuit, who should be a grand agent in the drama. To this Mr. Harris alludes in his next:—

Belmont, Thursday.

"My dear Dibdin,

"Thanks—most sincere—for your very friendly zeal in expediting the opera in the very assiduous way that you do. I owe you for many a good laugh you have given me during [illegible] think 'The [illegible] Harry to

take most especial care of our scenery—for I have our brilliant success, in all our particulars, much at heart. If your music is not complete, you may find some most beautiful melodies in Arne's opera of 'Eliza.' If you can give our painters any hints for our scenery, pray do. Whitmore and Greaves will be glad to attend to you; and so will Farley about the dresses, if you tell him that it is by my particular desire you consult him. That tardy Hill (the copyist) has not sent me the piece—a villain!

"Yours ever truly,

"T. HARRIS."

I should not permit "Zuma" to occupy so much room here, as, poor lady! she certainly ultimately miscarried: but as I have often asserted, that my first copies of plays were fatally injured by the "improvements" dictated imperiously by the many concerned; Mr. Harris's letters contain testimony to bear me out in my assertions. We have already read that he conceived the manuscript, as originally presented to him, contained great interest; when the play was acted, it indubitably possessed no interest at all. From Friday to Sunday only Mr. Harris waits before his kind and business-like anxiety prompts the following:—

Brighton, Sunday.

"My dear Dibdin,

"Harry is here,* and gives me a very good account of the music, &c. &c. The whole is very much improved indeed. You have had so much trouble already, that I am really sorry and ashamed to ask you to attend to every thing. Could you give Liston's character a lift?

"Ever yours,

"T. HARRIS."

Soon after, from Belmont:—

"My dear Dibdin,

"Have you seen any thing of our new recruit, Mrs. Garrick, and how do you like her? Hope your scenery is all going on to your satisfaction. After you have given my best regards to Mrs. Dibdin, pray thank her very much for her annual present: it was excellent.

"Ever most truly yours,

"T. HARRIS."

"Zuma" came out; was much applauded, and much disapproved. The principal incident in the story depended greatly on the absence of a

husband from the vice-regal court of Iberian Peru; but, unfortunately for me, it was thought by the musical folks imperative on the husband to come an immense number of miles in three quarters of an hour, to sing an echo duet (which was rapturously encored) with his wife; the consistency of which was about equal to that of proposing an interview at the Royal Exchange, between Trudge and one of his London sweet-hearts, in the first act of George Colman's opera of "Inkle and Yarico." The following brief pre-fatory matter I thought necessary to address to the reader, on publishing "Zuma:"

Advertisement.

To that liberal public which has sanctioned so many of the author's attempts, he ventures to say, in defence of his *intentions* with regard to this opera, that it has been so trans-formed, transposed, and altered in various ways, through all its incidents and situations, for the sake, no doubt, of im-proved musical subjects,—that it may not be improperly compared to the production of a provincial scene-painter, (Mr. Mate, of Margate, *vide* Vol. I.) who having com-menced the representation of a grove, was so assailed with hints, commands, and advice from every part of the theatre, that, in consequence of unavoidable acquiescence with all,—his intended landscape became gradually metamorphosed into a street.

Had this piece appeared [illegible] originally

written it, even at the Surrey, I should, I think, have gained some credit by it: as it was, I had some months of trouble, gained no ground with the public, and, I believe, including copy-right, I received less than £100.

I must now descend the ladder of *patent* authorship to the humble landing-place of my own little theatre, which I re-opened on the 26th of December with Garrick's "Christmas Tale," and my father's admirable pantomime of "The Touchstone," attributed erroneously to Mr. Garrick by Mr. Boaden, in his "Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons." I wrote a romance called "the Knights of the Lion," which preceded "Tom Jones," an operatic burletta in three acts: this became a stock-piece, and was afterwards, for a liberal recompense, performed at the Adelphi Theatre. "Zapolya," and "the Three Talismans," were approved melo-drames; and "Sir Launcelot Greaves" was received as any thing founded on Smollett ought to be. "The Duke and the Devil" I altered from Garrick's "Duke and No Duke:" it hit very hard; and one night I was requested to walk into a private box, where I found Mr. and Mrs. Coutts. Mrs. Coutts complimented me on the *tout-ensemble* of the theatre, particularly the band, scenery, and

to say, that since the death of his friend David Garrick, he had not met with more pleasure in a theatre than in seeing a piece of Garrick's so well revived. Mrs. Coutts requested, on my taking leave, I would send the treasurer to her; and asking him for the two guineas she had paid for her box, gave him ten pounds in return. On a subsequent occasion the theatre experienced a similar instance of liberality.

Mrs. Evance, the lady of a worthy and distinguished Surrey magistrate, presented me with the translation of a French melo-drame, with liberty to mould it in any form I deemed suitable to my audience; and I produced it, in the shape of "Khouli Khan." A *petite pièce*, I wrote for Miss Jonas, a promising young actress, followed, called "Rather Too Bad;"—and then, feeling a little sore, though by no means angry, at the causes of my late want of success at Covent-Garden, when I thought I was entitled to hope for better fortune,—I brought out a comic sketch in three acts entitled "How to write an Opera." The incongruity of individual and united suggestions from every performer, composer, artist, &c. and the fatal effects of their being all attended to, I attempted to satirise in this outline, which certainly created a hearty laugh for many nights. "Humphrey Clinker," I trust [illegible] no dis-

credit. The success of this piece was the more gratifying, as I was always enthusiastically partial to that novel, and felt great anxiety that so excellent a subject should not be disgraced by passing through my hands. When I produced the comedy of "the School for Prejudice" at Covent-Garden, some years before, Mr. Munden asked me in what style I wished him to play the part of Old Liberal? I replied, I meant it as an humble imitation of Matthew Bramble. "And who the devil's Matthew Bramble?" to my astonishment inquired the veteran. "You are pleased to joke, sir; you have of course read Humphrey Clinker?"—"Not I, sir; after I left school I never read any books but plays—and no play unless I had a part in it—and even then no more of such play than was immediately connected with the character assigned me."

My next obligations to Smollett were in the shape of "Roderick Random," in three long acts; and "Ferdinand Count Fathom," in one short one; followed by "Red Riding-hood," from the French. The theatre was frequently honoured by the patronage (on particular nights) of several of the royal family: their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Kent often distinguished me by their notice; and shortly before the sudden and

man of their Royal Highnesses' suite called officially to inform me their Royal Highnesses so much approved the representations they had witnessed at the Surrey, that they had commissioned him to take a box for their Royal Highnesses for a month. This was cheering in the extreme: their Royal Highnesses had many times publicly honoured my house, and on each evening of their presence it filled to an overflow. Generally it was desired that books of the pieces to be acted might be previously sent to Her Royal Highness, who was not then so conversant with the English language as at present: those books were returned after the evening's entertainments, with the condescending assurance that the Duchess perfectly heard, comprehended, and approved the dramatic representations she had witnessed.

I had advertised my benefit in 1817, but from prior fatigue and illness, of which I had an extraordinary share at that time, had not been able to sit down, as usual, and write a new piece. A parcel, anonymously addressed from Paris, with a complimentary letter, (from what friend I do not to this moment know, but beg leave here to acknowledge the lender's kindness,) came with a melo-drame called "La Chapelle du Bois." I received it on a T[illegible]ht: my

benefit was on the following Monday. Fitz-william was present at the opening of the parcel, and advised I should play the piece (then un-translated) for my benefit: I urged the impossibility: he urged the kind devotedness of the actors; but then I had the piece to translate and adapt, and the songs to write; and there were three new scenes at least to be painted, *cum multis aliis*, such as dresses, properties, &c. to prepare. Notwithstanding, we concluded that an effort ought to be made, and then went to Drury-Lane to see a *ci-devant* Surrey performer of the name of Weston make his *début*. I, who was still very unwell, translated the piece the next day in bed; read it on the Thursday, under the title of "The Invisible Witness, or the Chapel in the Wood;" produced it on the Monday; after which it was acted during the remainder of the season, *i. e.* about thirty nights. The same subject was produced at Covent-Garden with much preparation, and had the additional advantage of its English author's having seen the original piece represented at Paris; yet it was not so lucky as ours. Mr. O. Smith produced me the melo-drame of "Lolonois, or the Buccaniers of 1660," which was well received.

ific

appearances of the "Great American Sea Serpent," led me to suppose such an idea, whether true or erroneous, was a fair subject for a Harlequin pantomime: I therefore wrote one, and produced "the Sea Serpent, or Harlequin Yankee:" I also adapted a tragedy from "Lucretia," and put "Fatal Curiosity" into a form suitable to a minor theatre, with the new name of "the Murdered Guest," which finished our summer season, and we closed in October till the following Christmas.

On going to Kingston for renewal of my licence, accompanied by Mrs. Dibdin, we were invited by the chairman of the Quarter Sessions and his lady to dine and remain at their residence till the next day: I scarcely need say the magistrate was Mr. Evance, who, on this occasion, as he had done before, paid a public compliment from the bench to the manner in which the Surrey Theatre had been conducted; which flattering testimony was repeated by the High Sheriff: and since the expiration of my lease, I was favoured by the following written evidence of the general satisfaction given by the management to the licensing authorities:—

"As a magistrate for the county of Surrey, I certify, that during the si[illegible] Thomas

Dibdin held the licence of the Surrey Theatre, *viz.* from July 1816 till October 1822, there was not a single complaint of mismanagement or improper conduct occurring in the public arrangements of the said theatre; and also that the moral tendency of the performances, as well as the respectability of the mode of their production, frequently met the approbation publicly expressed of the chairman and magistracy assembled in Quarter Session at Kingston, who appeared at all times to consider the conduct of the aforesaid Thomas Dibdin deserving of every encouragement.

"(Signed)—THOMAS EVANCE,
Chairman of the Sessions at Kingston,
and presiding Magistrate at Union-Hall
during the above period, &c. &c. &c."

The above was accompanied by the following note:—

"Dear Sir,

"I feel great pleasure in certifying the truth of the enclosed statement, by subscribing my name to it, both as the senior magistrate at Union-Hall, and chairman of the Surrey Sessions holden at Kingston, where the licences ...riod.

Wishing you the success you greatly merit, I am

"Your humble servant,

"THOMAS EVANCE."

Belmont House, Vauxhall, 15th Jan. 1825.

Thomas Dibdin, Esq.

During this year, 1818, I was honoured by an M. P. with the expensive commission of making in my theatre all his flags and other showy paraphernalia for his contested election at Boston, and the said honour was all I received towards paying my silk-mercer, *décorateurs*, &c. &c. who looked to me for, and obtained a more substantial profit. The above compliance with the candidate's earnest request was by no means connected with any idea of politics or party on my side, but arose from a desire to oblige; and I see by a letter of the hon. member, now lying before me, that my banners, &c. proved very material towards the success of the election. In this year also I wrote either a prologue or epilogue for a comedy of Drury, from the pen of my old Manchester friend, S. W. Ryley, author of "The Itinerant," &c.: he had always been peculiarly unfortunate in his theatrical pursuits: and some years before, just as he was making a hit at Dr[illegible] theatre

was burnt down, and he lost his expected engagement. A letter respecting his comedy will serve to evince what difficulty the committee had to meet the wishes of every one, as well as how prominent the *genus irritabile vatum* will appear in the meekest mind under the terrors of an approaching trial before the critics of a London pit:—

Tuesday night.

"My excellent friend,

"May you never meet with the unpleasant and truly heart-rending occurrences I am destined to encounter! The committee insist on my play immediately, without the powerful aid of my friend Johnstone, and I must submit: they insist also the title of my play shall be "The Castle of Glendower," and I must give way, however reluctantly: still, however, your Muse may proceed on the same premises: a castle is a castle, whether in Wales or in the air. I declare I feel myself more indebted for this kind assistance than I am able to express; and the only addition you can make to the favour, will be, at all times and all seasons, to command the services of your very old and very sincere friend.

On the 26th of December I re-opened the Surrey Theatre, having written three new pieces for the occasion;—the spectacle of "Azim, or Wants and Superfluities;" the farce of "Scraps;" and the melo-drame from Mrs. Opie's tale of "The Reprobate:" they were all well received. Having engaged Mrs. Egerton, that lady happily suggested that Madge Wildfire would be an eligible character for her *début*, in case I felt inclined to dramatise the beautiful romance of "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," which had not yet been attempted for the stage. I had, at this time, been so variously occupied by writing and management, that although I had heard much of, I never had read, "the Tales of My Landlord." The conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Egerton occurred on Thursday, December 31st: I procured the romance that evening; read, altered, and adapted it to my stage and company by the Wednesday following; put it in rehearsal on Thursday; and, on the succeeding Wednesday, produced the melo-dramatic romance of "the Lily of St. Leonard's, or Heart of Mid-Lothian;"—which was acted above one hundred and seventy nights in the space of nine months. During the short period of preparation, Mr. Wilson, assisted only by his nephew Mr. Wilkins, and my late nephew [illegible] ...inted

eleven new scenes for it; Mr. Erskine admirably composed and arranged the music; and there was not a performer, in the numerous list of its cast, who did not add to his or her former reputation, or create a new one, by the successful and characteristic energy with which every character, however trivial, was performed. Letters of congratulation flowed in from friends and strangers, and the character of St. George's-Fields seemed to have undergone a temporary change: carriages of the first nobility graced the road in nightly lines, sometimes double, extending from the theatre to Charlotte-street, opposite Rowland Hill's Chapel. All were pleased, all laughed and cried; and, during the representation, I have seen tears stealing down the "iron cheeks" of poor Jem Brandon, "albeit unused to the melting mood," who came to scoff at "Surrey solemnities;" and from the eyes of the gay George Robins, who even called to tell me so.

"Approbation from Sir Hubert Stanley is praise indeed!" The managers of the "great grand" theatres themselves congratulated me, and, at the same time, did all they could to take Miss Taylor from me, in consequence of her exquisite style of acting in Jeannie Deans; but she remained at her post, untempted by pro-

Very few instances occur of the copy-right of any production at a minor theatre being thought worth purchasing at all; but (thanks to the genius of the Great Unknown!) Mr. Stodart, bookseller, of the Strand, gave me sixty guineas for the book, which, as I afterwards learned, amply repaid the purchase. I cannot refrain from giving the letters of two or three friends on the occasion: the first from the worthy magistrate I have just mentioned, and to whom I afterwards dedicated the play; the second from the editor of a highly-respectable journal; and one from my old friend Parry, the author and musical composer; neither of whom would have volunteered one word that they did not feel. I am not indulging in these insertions on the score of my own vanity, but because they are, in a great measure, due to the great author of the original work, and because they assist me to do justice to the actors and artists of every class and description, who gave their talents and their zeal toward the production of this fortunate novelty:—

Walcot Place, Thursday, Jan. 14th, 1819.

"Dear Sir,

"It is with great pleasure I congratulate you and *Her Majesty th*[illegible] the bril-

liant applause with which the performance of 'the Heart of Mid-Lothian' was last night received and announced for a second representation. In the early part of my life, I was for many years a frequenter of the theatres at a time when the stage was held in the highest repute; but believe me sincere in saying, my feelings were never more sensibly gratified than they were yesterday evening. The piece does great credit to the head and heart of the original author of the romance, and of him who has so successfully dramatised it; and the performers did justice to you by attention to their parts, and a correct colouring to the characters they respectively represented. Mrs. Evance joins me in best wishes that 'the Heart of Mid-Lothian' may be attended with that benefit you are entitled to hope for.

"Yours truly,

"THOS. EVANCE."

Red-Lion-square, Jan. 16th, 1819.

"My dear Sir,

"Most sincerely do I congratulate you on the success of 'the Heart of Mid-Lothian:' its run must be long and prosperous, for its merits are many and decisive. The greatest diffi-

peared to me to be in the dialect, which, if spoken with its true accent, would be unintelligible to nine-tenths of the audience; and, if not done so, might get the imputation of bad Scotch. I was, however, much pleased to see this difficulty so well got over. By-the-by, one of the worst performers in the piece talked the best Scotch; for Fitzwilliam, my old favourite, notwithstanding the general excellence of his Laird of Dumbiedikes, frequently mixed a little Irish in his dialogue. No language of mine can do justice to the excellent acting of Mrs. Egerton and Miss Taylor, and of the latter particularly in the interview with the queen,—one of the most interesting and best written scenes in the whole novel. I regretted much my not having room to say more this week publicly, but I then had not seen the piece; I shall, however, I hope, be enabled to do it more ample justice in future, as well in this instance, as in the many opportunities which the proprietor of the Surrey affords his friends of praising him without the imputation of flattery or of wronging their better judgment.

"Wishing you every success, I remain, my dear Sir, &c. &c. yours most truly,

Tho. Dibdin, Esq. "* * * * * *."

"P. S. I have just h[illegible] hat an

opera at Covent-Garden on the same subject is coming out. I doubt not but it will be accelerated by your success."

The next is from Mr. Parry:—

"My dear friend,

"I must write to you; I cannot rest; I never was more delighted in my life than on Saturday evening with 'the Heart of Mid Lothian:' the enclosed are the sincere sentiments of a very *sincere* friend of yours. I went, with the gentleman who accompanied me to the theatre, after the play, to a coffee-house, where, in the presence of more than twenty, we proclaimed it the best piece that has been produced these ten years; so that I hope you will get a few customers: I shall come again soon. Would not intrude on Saturday, as you had friends in your box. I had the misfortune, in changing my coat on Saturday, to come out without a pocket-handkerchief. To declare to you honestly, I wanted it more for my eyes than my nose, were nothing but the truth: I made use of the play-bill. My duty to Her Majesty, and believe me most truly yours,

"J. Parry."

But the most extraordinary testimony of approbation came from a gentleman who has frequently distinguished himself by writing under the signature of "Beppo;" and who not only sent a long and whimsically well-written letter, abounding with discriminate and warm applause, but a poem of some hundred lines, of which, as he afterwards published it, I will not repeat any part here. I feel grateful to him and all my friends, who appeared so eager to seize this opportunity of testifying their regard; and, with respect to the performers and others concerned in the representation of the play, I will take the liberty of concluding my chapter by a repetition of the placard of thanks I placed over the green-room chimney-piece on the succeeding morning:—

"G. O.

"*Password* SUCCESS—*Countersign* THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

"Head Quarters, January 14th, 1819.

"The Commander-in-Chief, in returning thanks to every individual of his distinguished corps for the brilliant and most successful operations of yesterday, is quite at a loss (as will be perceived) to find a new mode of expressing his sincere acknowledgments. To General Giroux, who led the light troops into [illegible] -nence-

ment of the attack;—to his colleagues Simpson and Bryan, his *aides-de-camp* Wyatt and Dore, for the diversion they so ably executed;—to the various military characters employed, and their partners in the field, as well as to all the heads of the corps—the service is most amply indebted. To the troops of the centre division, who penetrated to the very 'Heart of Mid-Lothian,' and planted 'the Lily of St. Leonard,' by an unexampled *coup de théâtre*,—it would be adding little to their former laurels to say their perseverance, firmness, and decision were acknowledged on all sides. The Amazonian General Taylor surpassed even the memorable days of 'Fazio;' the Laird of Dumbiedikes surmounted all his difficulties, and maintained his ancient reputation; his Grace the Duke of Argyle, who held the difficult and not very profitable position assigned him in the third division of the centre, having fought under the immediate observance of Her Majesty, we are authorised to convey to him unqualified approval and applause. The lately arrived and valuable auxiliaries Egerton and Horn, unused to our ground and mode of warfare, were not only as much at home as if they had been veterans in our fields, but proved themselves great and solid additions to an esta-

Major Frith distinguished himself greatly as a new commander in a minor company. To Field-Marshal Brookes, entrusted with two different services in one day, we don't know whether the service was most indebted to her spirited attack on the barn-door, or her retreat from the tobacconist's parlour to a Scotch quick step. Of other most meritorious staff-officers, we must say that Generals Watkins, Clifford, Gomery, and Fawcett, with Gibbon and Leonard (who commanded the rifle corps), sustained their posts like chiefs of a royal army, and were ably supported by the commanders of the fire-ships, Balchristie, Saddletree, Dalmahoy, and Howden: the frigate Sally, and the bomb-ketch Rasper, must not be omitted. To Adjutant-General Adcock, the guerilla chief Ridgway, (who superintended the actions and ably maintained his post on Ratcliffe-highway,) and the officers and gentlemen of the town-guard, every praise is sincerely offered. With respect to the rear-guard, other details of gallant performances have come to us in 'Scraps',* which we beg to answer with additional thanks.

"D. *Generalissimo.*

"N. B. The colours, under the command of

* A very popular aft[illegible]

Marshal Wilson (principal scene-painter) and his *aides-de-camp*, were uncommonly brilliant and triumphant: the plans of the Marshal as an engineer were masterly; and it is evident that he knows how to draw houses, as well as any member of the corps. The corps of artificers, &c. &c. are all proportionally entitled to distinguished thanks and remembrance."

The drama from the "Heart of Mid-Lothian," which had been acted at Covent-Garden, was produced at the Theatre-Royal Edinburgh; and the Surrey Theatre "Heart of Mid-Lothian" was acted at the minor theatre, when its attraction, for many nights, was almost beyond precedent. Mrs. H. Siddons having occasion to visit town, came to the Surrey to see our piece; and having solicited a copy properly marked for representation, produced it at the Theatre Royal, on her return to Edinburgh, as "Dibdin's Heart of Mid-Lothian;" and notwithstanding its prior and frequent repetition at the Caledonian Circus, and the recent performance of the "regular Covent-Garden one at the Royal Theatre," our minor paraphrase rode triumphantly through the remainder of the Edinburgh season.

Drury-Lane Theatre was now to be let to

wealthy tradesman called on me to say, that if I would undertake the management of the theatre, and take it jointly with him, he would provide all monies necessary, and authorised me immediately to make a bidding for the lease in his name and my own. As soon as I had done so, the late Mr. Ward, secretary, and Mr. Burgess, solicitor to the committee, or rather to the theatre of Drury-Lane, called on me, and professed themselves delighted at the idea of my becoming a lessee. I had, as I have already observed, examined the treasury-books, and found the scale of necessary nightly expense within five or six pounds of what I had, from observation, calculated. About the time of my sending in my last sealed bidding, Mr. Walker, Mr. Ward, and Mr. Burgess did me the favour to dine with me: a question arose as to what would be the probable nightly expenses of Drury-Lane Theatre: I enumerated my estimates of them, and Mr. Ward wrote them down. When we had finished, he asked, "But where is *my* salary?" I replied: "Sir, the committee are to have a sort of overseer in the theatre to prevent deterioration of the property; and, as their secretary, I presume you are to be placed in that situation: I, therefore, think it but fair that the committee, on behalf [illegible] ...ld pay

their own officer; for after the sum I have agreed to bid, I cannot." Mr. Ward instantly threw down his pen, and distinctly said,—"Then you won't have the theatre." I repeated, I could not think of paying either the secretary or the solicitor to the theatre. My guests departed: Mr. Elliston, by an extraordinary instance of luck, (whether good or bad I do not know,) bid exactly one hundred per annum more than my offer for Mr. Walker and myself, which was £10,100 per annum, as advised by Mr. Ward; and although my friend's security was of the very first class, yet there were

Reasons and causes, look you!

why those who would not pay a great deal more than the nominal rentage could not be accepted. It is usual, I believe, for sealed proposals to be opened in presence of the bidders, or at least with some degree of publicity; but this was not done, nor did my friend's offer even meet with the honour of an answer, though the theatre was at that time very considerably indebted to him; and when I went to the committee-room to state the solid grounds on which I became a candidate, and asked to inspect the treasury account of receipts and expenses.—

ceived rather a repellent hint from a gentleman of "the board," that they did not wish a tenant backed by gentlemen of "the committee," supposing that to be my case. At the same time, it is well known that the committee, if not immediately concerned with the gentleman who *did* obtain the lease, did back *him*, as one of those gentlemen termed it, although not permitted to back *me*. I beg leave to add, that the committee I am speaking of, did not consist of the Earl of Essex, Lord Byron, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, the Hon. George Lamb, or Peter Moore, M. P.

CHAP. VIII.

1819—1820.

" Another, and another, still succeeds."—*Pope.*

" The Ruffian Boy"—" Douglas"—Sir William Rawlins —Mr. Cordy—Bury my aunt—Re-open the Surrey—Miss Copeland—" Harlequin Pic-nic"—Hermit of Mount Pausilippo"—" The Unknown"—" Florence Macarthy"— " Siege of Troy"—" Montrose"—" Bride of Lammermore" " Abbot of San Martino"—" Scanderbeg"—" President and Peasant's Daughter"—" Mousetraps"—" Small Profits" —" Force of Conscience"—" Giant Spectre"—" Ivanhoe" —Deaths of the Duke of Kent and His late Majesty—And of Brother Cecil—Retrospect of Raymond's funeral—" Fate of Calas"—" Widow and No Widow"—" Knight of Rhodes" —" Old Mortality"—" Edda"—" Wheels within Wheels" —" Orsino"—" Stop Thief"—Death of Mr. Harris— " Everybody's Cousin"—" Belisarius"—" Peggy Larkins" " Family Punch-bowl"—" Toss'd in a Blanket"—" Kenilworth"—" Blue Baron"—" Fifty Marriages and Nine-and-forty Murders"—" Alonzo and Imogine" in a new form —" Rise and Fall"—Rein-deer not immortal—" Laplanders" frost-nipped.

producing even a new after-piece to accompany it, nor did it then need any aid to its attraction; but from a sense of duty to my public friends, who continued to fill my house nightly, I converted Mrs. Opie's interesting tale of "The Ruffian Boy" to a successful melo-drame bearing the same title: Mrs. Egerton performed Young Norval in "Douglas;" which tragedy, without omitting a single line of the author, made a very splendid melo-drame, with the additions of Lord Randolph's magnificent banquet, a martial Scotch dance, and a glee, formed from Home's words,—

Free is his heart who for his country fights, &c. &c.

exquisitely set by Sanderson, and delightfully sung, together with an expensive processional representation of the landing of the Danes: besides all this, as a Surrey Theatre gallery audience always expects some *ultra* incident, I had a representative of Lady Randolph in the person of a very clever boy, by whose good acting and fearless agility, the northern dame, at the conclusion of the tragedy, was seen to throw herself from a distant precipice into a boiling ocean, in a style which literally brought down thunders of applause.

There is something so refreshing in going back—

A hundred years ago,
Or thereabout, I believe, (*C. Dibdin, the elder*)

to the memory of Moor-fields, that I cannot hide my delight at receiving this season another letter from Sir William, proving he still kindly remembered his fugitive pupil. I had again met Sir William at a public party; and remembering the pleasure we had both experienced *autrefois* in the gallery of the never-to-be-forgotten Royalty;—remembering also the liberality with which Sir William had come forward to buy a life freedom, because I was appointed demi-manager to the sub-committee;—I respectfully took the liberty of asking his acceptance, not of a bill, but of some undated admissions to my theatre. He, like Walter Scott's hero in "the Lady of the Lake,"—

Took the kindness as 'twas meant;

and to show that he did so, ultimately turned it into a benefit to me, as the following letter will "frutify." It is the last I ever had from Sir William, after an interval of nine years; and it will continue so till he favours me with another, which I hope will not be long, especially if it is

"My dear Sir,

"Allow me to offer you many thanks for the much-esteemed kindness you favoured me with in the present of tickets to your theatre. I was mentioning the circumstance at a friend's table on Sunday last, when a proposition was made to make use of part of them for this evening; but as I know how indiscreet it would be to crowd your boxes on the representation of a new piece, I certainly will not use them in that improper way; but as my friends had proposed coming, and I had assented, I shall feel additional obligation if you will have the kindness to let your box-keeper preserve me eligible seats this evening for six, the money for which (being twenty-four shillings) the bearer brings with him. Be pleased, therefore, to favour him with tickets of admission for that number.

"I remain, my dear sir, yours obediently and truly,

"W. RAWLINS."

44, Broad-street Buildings,
July 6, 1819.

What a much more respectably relative position, does this letter place Sir William and myself in, and how much more grateful to each other's feelings, than wh[illegible] before

the upright and ugly chamberlain Wilkes,—Sir William for threshing me, and I for deserving it! He destroyed my theatre then, and now (delightful contrast!) you find him actually pressing his friends into the service of supporting it! My good friend Durrant, of the house of Hazard, and the Stock-Exchange, will enter into my feelings on this occasion: he must remember all circumstances from my *apprentissage*, and, I think, has, from his great attachment to theatricals, sufficiently watched my progress to be able to vouch for the authenticity of nearly all I have recited.

It would be the "highest height" of ingratitude were I to omit an opportunity of expressing my perfectly disinterested feelings of sincere gratitude (I repeat disinterested, for its object has, like most of my old friends, been dead many years,) to the memory of the worthy man to whom my brother Charles served his time, and remained fourteen years with,—a circumstance equally honourable to both. I did myself the honour of inscribing my "Cabinet" to Mr. Cordy, who took so warm an interest in the welfare of any one related to my brother, that he would have left a sick bed to be present

possible, to inconvenience me by taking so many places, that he rendered it difficult for me to accommodate my other friends. As for myself, though falling

Into the sear, the yellow leaf,—

(yet, as Othello says, "that 's not much,") I will hope that a few green blossoms of friendship yet remain for me; and though I cannot recall the dead leaves which once formed my gayest chaplet, yet no one will feel offence at my regretting them.

At the commencement of this year I buried my maternal aunt, by which last expense another pensioner was removed to a better world. On the 29th of March I closed the theatre. As Mrs. Egerton's engagement had finished, and "the Heart of Mid-Lothian" was still in great request, I was rather in doubt as to how or where I should be able to find another Madge Wildfire. I had, on a visit to Dover, in 1818, seen Miss Copeland perform Bianca in "Fazio;" and as she was already engaged by Mr. Elliston at the Olympic Theatre for the winter season, I could not avail myself of her talents till Easter 1819. As the young lady wished to confine herself to comic operatic b[illegible] was

diffident of her powers in attempting such a character as that of Madge Wildfire, particularly as Mrs. Egerton had been extremely successful in it: I therefore engaged a lady, who (I was told) had played the part with great effect in a provincial Theatre Royal; she had a good figure, recited with great good sense, and her manners were prepossessing; but when all was arranged, and we were within a very few days of opening the theatre, the husband of the lady, imagining I could not play "the Heart of Mid-Lothian" without his wife, made it a *sine qua non* that he also should be engaged, although I had expressly stated, when his wife had agreed to accept a good salary, that I could not add an appointment for the gentleman, who was confessedly of no utility: I therefore resisted the demand; and though I could have insisted on the fulfilment of the lady's agreement, as sanctioned in the first instance by the husband,—I willingly dispensed with it; and having, at length, persuaded Miss Copeland to attempt the part, (so much a *desideratum* at the moment,) her reception in it was so deservedly enthusiastic, that I immediately added a pound per week to the salary we had agreed on for the season, and "the Heart of Mid-Lothian" [illegible]

night, by splendid audiences, with undiminished popularity.

We had opened with "Douglas," "Harlequin Pic-nic," and a melo-drame I adapted from the French, "The Hermit of Mount Pausilippo." Mr. Incledon and Mrs. Mountain added greatly to the attraction of the season, by playing in adaptations from "The Beggar's Opera," "Love in a Village," "Castle of Andalusia," "Quaker," "Waterman," "Recruiting Serjeant," "Robin Hood," &c. &c. After performing a posthumous piece (written by the late Dr. V. and presented me by his daughter) called "The Unknown," I dramatised Lady Morgan's romance of "Florence Macarthy," the then proprietors of the Cobourg Theatre producing a piece with a similar title on the same evening: during the run of this, I wrote a comic spectacle, and brought it out at great expense, with the imposing name of "Melo-drame Mad, or the Siege of Troy:"—in this piece, I converted the air of "The Soldier Tired" into a grand burlesque chorus, which being extremely well executed, by at least two dozen good voices,—had a wonderfully comic, yet impressive effect: I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Braham applauding and encoring it from the boxes more than once. In another piece I wrote words to the [illegible] ebrated

"Overture to Lodoiska," to be sung as a chorus, which proved very effective, though not so decidedly so as the "Soldier Tired." Having, as above stated, brought out one "Unknown," I again availed myself of the talents of another and a greater author; and, fearful the Cobourg Theatre would either anticipate or run an even race with me, as in the instance of "Florence Macarthy,"—I produced, in less than a fortnight from their publication, the tales of "Montrose" and "The Bride of Lammermore," both in one night, and had no reason to repent my exertions. I next altered a tragedy, by Major Parlby, of the East-India Company's service, to the melo-drame of "The Abbot of San Martino;" changed a French romance, called "Sbogar," to the spectacle of "Scanderbeg;" brought out "Richard Cœur-de-Lion; adapted, from the German, "The President and Peasant's Daughter," originally called "The Minister;" and wrote the burletta of "Spoiled Children" for my own benefit. Mrs. Dibdin's night was again distinguished by our constant patrons, their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Kent. I subjoin the very flattering note written by Captain Parker, at the instance of their

Kensington Palace, Oct. 9th, 1819.

"Sir,

"Having laid before the Duke of Kent your letter of this day, with the accompanying copies of your new after-piece, I am desired by His Royal Highness to express his acknowledgments for your obliging attention. His Royal Highness proposes himself to look it over previous to visiting the theatre this evening, and also undertakes to make the Duchess acquainted with the outline of the story, in order that Her Royal Highness also may benefit from your politeness. The Duke directs me to ask whether 'Humphrey Clinker' will form part of the entertainments on the evening of Mrs. Dibdin's benefit, on Monday se'nnight? as if so, the Duchess derived so much amusement from that piece upon a recent occasion, that it would be a great inducement for Her Royal Highness to attend the Surrey Theatre to witness a repetition of it in support of Mrs. Dibdin's interests.

"I have the honour to remain, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

"J. Parker."

Thomas Dibdin, Esq.

We had also been honoured by the repeated commands of the [illegible] Dukes of

Gloucester, Wellington, Argyle; Duchesses of Gloucester, Wellington, Bedford, and numerous other leading nobility. It was October when we closed; and by the Christmas re-opening I had written two new pieces,—"Mouse Traps" and "Small Profits," ominous name! Mrs. Mountain gave me the German novel on which the first was founded. I next arranged a drama called "The Force of Conscience;" and to introduce the valuable assistance of Mrs. Chatterley, transformed Jephson's "Count of Narbonne" into "The Prophecy, or Giant Spectre." "Ivanhoe" was immediately produced at very considerable expense; and, but for lamentable circumstances, which intervened to impede its progress, promised to renew the profitable days of "The Heart of Mid-Lothian." I consulted every well-authenticated accessible authority for the *vrai costume* of this really splendid drama, as well as following minutely the excellent descriptions of the great author, and making copies, from a great picture painted by Mr. Wilkin for Sir Godfrey Webster, and then publicly exhibiting, of the Battle of Hastings. Our tournament scene was numerously grouped with living actors, and a continuation of figures in painted and

cuted, that to the deceived eye there appeared at least a thousand nobles, knights, guards, and spectators on the stage; their appointments so gorgeously correct, that the "leading Journal" of the following day proclaimed,—"Had Froissart himself been alive, he must have been satisfied, and have owned the truth of the living portrait."

We were now all in high spirits; additional police officers, and attendants for the coming carriages of nobility, were applying to be engaged,—when, at the end of only three days, (it is with heartfelt and respectful sorrow I relate it) we were deprived by death of our generous patron, His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent!! The theatre was of course closed for three days; and in four days immediately succeeding its re-opening, was shut up again on account of the lamented demise of that patron of all theatres, and friend of all actors, His late Majesty George the Third!! and the routine of fashionable audiences, which was once more beginning to grace our boxes, was interrupted, never to be resumed during the whole remainder of the season: the treaty for His Royal Highness of Kent's box, the completion of which would have induced many of the principal nobility to

follow the liberal example, and raised the reputation of the theatre, as well as have stimulated us all to fresh exertion, in order to merit such patronage,—fell to earth, and was

buried in our Royal Patron's grave.

To descend to humbler records:—Death seemed to care as little for our personal friends as for our benefactors of kingly line. Poor brother Cecil, of whom formerly so much has been said, died four days subsequent to the funeral of His Majesty. Cecil had never been very fortunate; and, though at that time in sad arrear with any thing like success myself, I again remembered our parting at Margate on my road to theatrical preferment: I buried him in Newington church-yard, and poor Cecil's funeral closed the last account of expense in that quarter. This melancholy subject reminds me that I omitted, in my account of 1817, the fact of my having officiated as one of the six theatrical managers who bore the pall over Mr. Raymond: I had dined with him at Mr. (Irish) Johnstone's on the 16th of October; he (Raymond) died on the 20th; and on the 26th, his funeral attracted the notice of the whole town: I believe there were (rather more than less) two hundred mourning coaches besides private carriages;

the attendant mourners, have since been followed on similar occasions, though not so numerously. Some time before, I had successively seen three of my partners in Sadler's Wells laid in the ground; and in the autumn of this year, my nephew Charles, whose increasing talent as an artist was beginning to be highly valuable to the Surrey, added to the mournful list.

"The Fate of Calas," commemorative of that bigotry which Voltaire, to his immortal honour, afterwards exposed, and in some degree brought to punishment,—formed the next subject of my labour: I altered the catastrophe, without, I hope, injuring the moral. Bengough (another departed manager) performed the persecuted bookseller in a manner which, had he been acting on the boards of patent legitimacy, would have stamped him a favourite with the public. Mrs. Mountain having re-engaged with me, I converted a sketch she furnished me with into a little operette, calculated to display the versatility of the lady's talents, called "Widow and No Widow;" and while it was successfully proceeding, I got up "The Knight of Rhodes," written by Sir James Bland Burgess, who twice made parties to see his play, and expressed himself much gratified by the splendour with which it was produced.

The Great Unknown, determined I should not be idle, sent forth his "Old Mortality" into the world, which I did *mon possible* not to disgrace while representing it at the Surrey: it was very finely acted; Huntley, O. Smith, and Wyatt, displayed skill and energy worthy a better theatre. Prior to this, Mr. Ball, since well known as a melo-dramatic writer, and author of the famed Adelphi "Pilot,"—wrote me a romance called "Edda," founded on "The Hermit of Warkworth," which was well received. The succeeding efforts of my pen were "Give a Man Luck, and throw him into the Sea," a Turkish tale; "Wheels within Wheels," a comic burletta; an alteration of one tragedy called "Orsino," another entitled "Rayner;" and an original little farce called "Stop Thief!" with which I closed the summer season of 1820—I wish I could say successfully as to pecuniary matters: applause we had in abundance; but theatres were increased and increasing; times getting by no means better; and people came to be pleased, but with as little intention as possible to pay.

In March I received the following notice, which I took *no* notice of, feeling quite certain I had nothing unkind to fear from Mr. Harris, who had not *my* theatre in his eye when for form's

Thomas Dibdin, Esq. Circus.

Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane,
29 March, 1820.

" Sir,

" An anxiety on the part of the proprietors of the two patent theatres of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, to avoid interfering with the entertainments of the public, has hitherto prevented them from enforcing the laws against the manifold infringements of their rights, which have so repeatedly taken place in the performances at the Circus. But observing that those performances extend to 'entertainments of the stage;' and, therefore, are not included in the license of the magistrates, which is confined to music and dancing;—the proprietors are compelled, for the protection of their establishments, to give you this notice—that, if you do not, in future, confine your performances strictly within the powers of your license, they will be under the painful necessity of having recourse to such measures as the laws have provided.

" We are, Sir, your very obedient servants,

(On the part of the Committee of Drury-Lane Theatre)

" C. W. Ward, *Secretary*.

(On the part of the Proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre)

" T. Harris."

However, when I saw people coming nightly to the Surrey officially connected with the Royal Theatres, (Mr. Ward among the rest,) I began to listen to hints given me that informations would be laid against my actors: under this impression, I was advised by a nobleman of high rank to petition His Majesty for a Lord Chamberlain's license, such as my father had been honoured with, and such as three or four minor theatres enjoy. I was also advised to solicit His Grace the Duke of Wellington, who had honoured the exhibitions at the Surrey with frequent and warm encomiums, to present my petition to the King; and proud of any circumstance that procured me the honour of a letter from so great a man, I insert it with something like that complacency which the clown felt at having been "spoken to" by a prince, who, after all, merely desired him to "stand out of the way:"—

"The Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Mr. Dibdin, and regrets to be obliged to inform him, in reply to his letter of the 5th instant, that he feels it to be quite impossible for him to interfere in the concerns of any theatre, and particularly not in those of all the theatres. The Duke, therefore, hopes that Mr.

It would be a pleasing relief to bring my venerated friend Mr. Harris once more on the scene, were it not that I grieve to say the following two letters were written within a very short period of his dissolution :—

Wimbledon Common,
Wednesday, 21st of June.

" My dear Dibdin,

" In a conversation no longer ago than Sunday last with Farley and Brandon in this place, I was lamenting the loss we were sustaining by not having your abilities to resort to, on all pressing occasions, in the manner in which we were formerly accustomed to do. You know our company, and I think you will allow their talents equal to any species of the drama you may select. I have now, therefore, only to say, that you may rely most firmly that the readiest and most friendly attentions shall be paid to any effort of your Muse, be it what it may.

" Yours most heartily,
" T. Harris."

In consequence, I cheerfully mentioned a comedy, afterwards acted at the Haymarket under [illegible] of " [illegible] Fall :" [illegible] still in

my possession; and the sketch of a pantomime: I soon received an answer, the contents of which, lamentably for me, were speedily rendered nugatory by an access of illness to my revered friend, which shortly proved fatal, and deprived the theatrical profession, and the play-going part of the public too, of one of the best friends of both in every possible sense of the word:—

Friday.

"My dear Sir,

"I am happy to hear you are so forward with your materials: pray send each of them to me as fast as you finish them, particularly the pantomime: but I am very desirous of having a *coronation* on a *particular* construction, combining something dramatic, as well as show and procession, &c. I am afraid you do not clearly understand me; indeed I hardly do myself. I am yet scarcely able to see and converse with a friend, but am recovering very fast. With best regards and compliments to Mrs. Dibdin and yourself, I remain

"Most truly yours,

"T. Harris."

"Do try your hand at the coronation: it is difficult, I know; but you will accomplish it—

Very few days after writing the above, my kind friend breathed his last. It had been for years a custom with us to exchange a Christmas present with Mr. Harris; and a Christmas preceding the above correspondence, after acknowledging the receipt of a basket, and sending back one much better filled, Mr. Harris concludes:—

"I am much pleased that you have not forgot our annual interchange of kindnesses; and should be more so, were you to renew your old habit of sending me a good opera, or any other dramatic piece your leisure may suggest to you.

"Ever truly yours,

"T. Harris."

I re-opened the Surrey Theatre December 26th, 1820, with three pieces I had written in the short recess: "Every Body's Cousin," a farcical burletta; and the serious melo-drame of "Belisarius;" the last, particularly effective, translated and adapted from the French: the third piece was an extravaganza burlesque of Marmontel's "Solyman the Magnificent," and I christened it "Peggy Larkins, or Beauty and the Bey." A fortnight sufficed to bring out a farce in two acts (which we were obliged to style a burletta), taken from nothing but [illegible] the mo-

ment, and called "The Family Punch-bowl:" and being offered, through Mr. Wrench, thirty guineas to write a burletta for the Olympic Theatre (one of my rivals), in a few days I produced "Toss'd in a Blanket," which I never saw acted, but am told was extremely well received. The supposed Unknown's romance of "Kenilworth" was published; and before I read it, I advertised, or what the actors call "underlined it," in my play-bills. On the same day, Mr. Elliston called on me, and begged I would bring it out at Drury-Lane:—I was in want of money, and desired to have £100 down, and to be secured in another, after my old custom at the Haymarket; and I made this claim because I had already underlined it for my own theatre. Mr. Elliston agreed to this; and, on the 23d of January, being entreated to use all possible expedition, I took the novel with me to Banstead; and on the fifth day returned with the piece completed. When I arrived at the Surrey, I found Mr. Elliston had been there in the morning, anxious to hear from me; and left a note to beg that if I came to town, (which I had said I should on that day, but of course had not promised the piece so soon,) I would dine with him in Stratford-place. I had dined early with my family

Elliston with the copy of "Kenilworth," and reading it to him, I repaired on the instant to Stratford-place, where, instead of being ushered to a closet audience, I found a very large dinner party, and Mr. Elliston, who pressed me, in the most friendly way, to dine in company with Mr. Braham, my old friend Russell, &c. &c.— and, I greatly regret to add, this was the last time I had the pleasure of being seated by Mrs. Elliston, another respected friend I was to see for the last time: her death took place soon after. Mr. Elliston expressed pleasure and surprise at my expedition in getting the play ready; —but, although it was so imperatively wanted, it was ten days at least before I could obtain a reading of it at the theatre; and even then, instead of assembling, as usual, the precise number of performers who had been previously named at a dinner in the Surrey Theatre by Mr. Elliston, Mr. Russell, and myself, as the cast of the piece; the whole company, including Miss Kelly, Madame Vestris, &c. &c. were called, and I (innocently, God help me! as I said before) read my piece, little imagining that the actors and actresses were to sit in judgment and deliver their opinions on it, as well as declare (for so they were asked) what character each preferred to play: of course, when [illegible] reading, every one said [illegible] Not

amiss!" and "So you don't finish it like the original?" &c. &c.—but when I asked Russell, as stage manager, to give out the parts, and name the next day's rehearsal, he said the parts were locked up, (by the by, for the sake of expedition I had been at the expense of having the parts copied myself,) and that Mr. Elliston having left the theatre, he (Mr. Russell) could not appoint a rehearsal. I should have premised, that it had been universally reported that Covent-Garden Theatre was immediately to produce "Kenilworth:" this report proved ill founded; and "Kenilworth" therefore was not *now* so immediately wanted at the national theatre of Drury-Lane. I had heretofore been proverbially rapid in distancing all my competitors, major and minor, in point of time, when producing the "great grand" Scotch novels on the stage; and now I had the inexpressible mortification to find "Kenilworth" acted at the Adelphi Theatre, while I was at hawk and buzzard between Drury-Lane and the Surrey. About the 4th or 5th of February, I was informed that it would not be wanted at Drury-Lane; and between that and Valentine's-day I had scenery, dresses, and all appointments ready, the performers all perfect, and produced it at the Surrey, where it had a

season: had I brought it out as first intended, it would have made some hundred pounds difference to me. It probably may now be observed, that the Drury-Lane green-room critics found the piece unpromising: if they did, where was their judgment? I had not long performed it, when Mr. Dimond desired Mr. Charlton to write to me from Bath, requesting, as a particular favour, a copy of the play, and even asked the loan of the gentlemen pensioners' dresses, &c. &c. It was there got up for the express purpose of Mrs. Bunn's playing Queen Elizabeth; and was so successful, that a transcript of my copy was afterwards acted from in other provincial theatres, in contradiction to an agreed understanding between me and the Bath Theatre. We shall, in a future chapter, come to the production of this piece at Drury-Lane, where it was of service to every one concerned in its production except myself; and all this might have been of less consequence, but that I was subsequently charged as a debt with the hundred pounds I had received, although I had strictly fulfilled my part of the conditions of the treaty.

A theatrical gentleman, of the name of Jervis, presented me with a clever sketch from which I wrote "The Three Blue Barons," a comic romance, that convulsed th[illegible] audi-

ences with laughter: in a few days I wrote, rehearsed, and presented to the public a very broadly-comic parody on the French opera of "The Danaides," which I called "Fifty Marriages and Nine-and-forty Murders:" this piece was well acted, and got up with liberal expense; and, had it, or "The Siege of Troy," been acted on a similar scale at either of the large theatres, I have no doubt but my laurels would have been greener and my purse heavier. I had, it may be remembered, (though not very likely,) in early days, produced a serious ballet pantomime at Sadler's Wells, from Mr. M. G. Lewis's tale of "Alonzo and Imogine:" the whole of that piece, particularly effective, was told in action. It struck me that if, in these more modern days of convenient melo-dramatic license, I were to add dialogue and songs explanatory of the story, the romance would be more intelligible and more effective, as well as better adapted to display the talents of the very superior company of performers the Surrey could boast: I therefore re-produced it as my closing piece this season: it instantly became a great favourite: and I have lately brought it out once more at Sadler's Wells, its ancient cradle, where it remains an approved drama, *sui generis*, even unto this

if you *won't* allow me, I *must* add) that, although the great Dons of the majestic establishments, and authors who have never condescended lower than the *ad captandum* line of patent play-writing, will probably widely dissent from my assertion,—to present a piece at a minor theatre, where all appointments—music, scenery, *corps dramatique*, and every thing else is on a very reduced scale, and yet where the same enlightened audience of London, unquestionably equal in judgment to any in the world, and sometimes more fastidious, expect complete entertainment,—I most humbly venture to say, notwithstanding all the "very wells for a *minor* theatre,"—and "considering what the thing is," and the "take it away to Sadler's Wells" of my Hebrew friends during the revolt of the ten tribes respecting "Family Quarrels;"—that a drama, to succeed on the "licensed, and not patent, stages," must require something in the shape of stamina quite equal to what we see supported by the great talent exclusively at the command of patent proprietors.

Talking of patent proprietors, I had like to have forgotten, among matters of more importance, that this year (1821) I produced a comedy in three acts on the legitimate boards of the "great grand" little Theatre in the Haymarket, under the title of "Rise and Fall:" it was

capitally received, and highly spoken of in the public prints; and Mr. Morris gave me £100 for it. Mr. Jones, of Covent-Garden, added greatly to his former fame, by his excellent performance of the young schoolmaster in it; and Mr. Terry was not more effective in the part he had to play, than in the impressive manner in which he executed the at all times unpleasant task of speaking a prologue. Some time after the success of this play, Mr. Morris called to inform me (after saying that "he stood entirely on his *own* legs,") that he had, under the idea that quadrupeds were attractive on the stage, applied to Mr. *Bullock* of the Piccadilly Museum, and engaged a herd of reindeer, to run up the red rocks and browze on the blue mountains of his namesake, (Morris,) the principal painter of the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket: Mr. M. politely added, that a two-act afterpiece, written by me, would probably cause these swift actors to have a great *run:* he also introduced me to a little greasy round man who looked like an oil barrel; his correspondently beautiful wife, in dimensions like a half anker; and their son, about the height of a Dutch cheese, with a hat on: this trio sang, danced, played the fiddle, and displayed their several accomplishments so

could possibly turn them to any stage account. However, the piece was written: my leader, Mr. Erskine, by Mr. Morris's appointment, composed overture, songs, melo-dramatic music, dances, &c.—the scenes were painted; the dances rehearsed at the Haymarket, under the direction of my ballet-master Mr. Ridgway; all the dresses made from authorities furnished and models kindly lent by Mr. Bullock; and when all subordinate matters were arranged, the performers were summoned to hear me read the piece of "The Laplanders," at my apartment in the Surrey Theatre. At the appointed hour no one appeared;—another and another hour succeeded; when at length, Mr. Terry, at that time stage manager of the Haymarket, came with a letter in his hand, announcing the melancholy fact, that eight of the reindeer had run themselves out of breath; gone to that bourn, where they would be employed, according to the northern mythology, to draw the shadowy sledges of departed Scandinavian heroes; and (to descend from the romantic fictions of the Edda to plain truth) that the projected piece must be laid aside, and all preparations postponed *sine die*, or, at least, till the arrival of a fresh importation of large horns and long legs from Lapland: the little round man, wife, and child were, in the

mean time, to drive their rapid sledge round the spacious plains of the Egyptian-hall; while Mr. Dibdin and Mr. Erskine, who had been applied to for their services, and had written and composed the piece, were not to be remunerated at all, in the opinion of Mr. Morris; and as the opinions of all theatrical proprietors are very decisive, I do not know that I should venture to arraign a judgment certainly against the interests of the proprietor of the Surrey, had not a dozen very obstinate English gentlemen in a jury-box had the *hardiesse*, some time subsequent, to declare, in an old-fashioned solemn form, that they beheld the matter in a very different point of view: but of this hereafter.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL. *

[library stamp]

CHAP. IX.

1821—1822.

"And one that hath had losses."—*Much ado about Nothing.*

I re-open the Surrey at Easter—"The Two Gregories"—Lord Byron's "Marino Faliero"—Notice of Chancery injunction—Mr. Murray—"Seven Champions"—"Mysterious Mother"—"Masonry"—"Hag of Poland"—"Frederick and Voltaire"—Her Majesty Queen Caroline visits the Surrey—Theatre thrown open to the public by His Majesty's command on the day of the Coronation—Closed on account of the Queen's death—Re-opens—"The Three Harlequins"—"Veterans"—"Duke's Bride"—Changes in the *corps dramatique*—Competitions with the Cobourg—"Jack in the Green"—"Man and the Monkey"—"The Pirate"—"Sir Arthur"—Relinquish the theatre to Mr. Watkyns Burroughs—New "Tom and Jerry"—Proposals from Mr. Morris, of the Haymarket—Serious and much-to-be-regretted event—Great and wilfully exaggerated misrepresentations respecting it—Its inefficiency and ill consequences.

We had so many favourite novelties of the past season which might still be worn then "in their newest gloss," that I only wrote one new piece for the opening at Easter,—"The Two Gregories," taken from *Jocrisse Valet et Jocrisse*

Maître, and which has become a favourite stock-piece, not only at all the minor theatres (in consequence of publication), but has even, though of minor lineage, been tolerated at Drury-Lane. At the bottom of my opening bill I announced a new melo-drame founded on Lord Byron's recent play of "Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice." A day or two after I received the annexed letter:—

"Sir,

"It having been mentioned to Mr. Murray that you are preparing to represent 'Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice,' a tragedy by Lord Byron, I am desired by him to give you notice that an injunction has been obtained by him against Robert William Elliston, to restrain the performance of that play or any part thereof: and should you or any other person persist in bringing forward this play in any way, application will be immediately made to the Chancellor to restrain such representation. I hope we shall not be compelled to adopt these measures against you, but that you will abstain from a measure contrary to the wishes of the author and the interest of the publisher.

"I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

"ALFRED TURNER."

So anxious were the legal gentlemen, that, either forgetting they had already written the above, or determined to warn me off his lordship's poetical premises effectually, they sent a second notice the next day. Upon this, in my turn, I wrote to Mr. Murray, expressing my dislike of the unceremonious and peremptory terms of *Messieurs* the solicitors, and received, in reply, the following handsome note, which was followed up by the present of a still more handsomely bound edition of Lord Byron's works, and some other books, equally acceptable:—

Albemarle-street, April 30th, 1821.

"Dear Sir,

"I have no hesitation in assuring you that I am very sorry for the annoyance to which you have been subjected on my account, for you have conducted yourself respecting the exhibition of Lord Byron's tragedy with most gentlemanly propriety. I was not aware of Mr. Bengough's having said to my clerk that it was your intention to found a drama upon the tragedy; but if I had, I should not have said any thing, conceiving that it would not have deterred you from doing what long custom had seemed to make your right. If you are passing my way, I shall have much pleasure in conversing with you, and explaining the mo[illegible]y conduct

respecting this tragedy. The case will be argued before the judges in the King's Bench, and, in the mean time, an account of receipts is to be kept. With compliments, I am, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"JOHN MURRAY."

T. Dibdin, Esq.

I next wrote a burlesque melo-drame, which was placed before the public at great expense for splendid and appropriate scenery, dresses, &c. called "The Seven Champions of Christendom." My following productions (besides altering several tragedies, &c.) were the burletta of "Masonry;" the romance of "Kedeth, or the Hag of Poland;" and the farce of "Frederick and Voltaire;" but from the period of the royal funerals, we never, on any evening, received half our expenses at the doors. On the day Queen Caroline arrived from the Continent, the Surrey roads were so lined with people, that every friend congratulated me on the prospect of having the fullest house of the season: it was imagined that after Her Majesty had passed, many of the innumerable host, who had been expecting her all the afternoon, would go into the theatre, either for rest, or to finish their half-holiday: but as many as could, followed the

Queen over the bridge; and those who did not go into public-houses, I presume, went home; and all were so completely engrossed by disputes on the subject of the day, that theatricals were out of the question, and my receipts, (for which some Change-alley speculators had made me anticipatory offers which I foolishly thought it unwise to accept,) instead of being the best of the season, were the worst of any night in the course of six years, being under fourteen pounds!!! which, to a manager whose nightly expense was at least eighty guineas, caused me any thing but the jubilee sensations which seemed to occupy most of my masters the public, among whom a complete alteration with respect to theatricals (or at least Surrey theatricals) appeared to have suddenly taken place: for except on the night of Her Majesty's public visit, when the receipts amounted to three hundred guineas, and on the evening of His Majesty's Coronation, when government paid for the house,—I did not receive half my nightly expenses on any night preceding or pending the parliamentary inquiry, or trial, as it was termed, of the late Queen Caroline. When Her Majesty honoured the Surrey with her patronage, she commanded "The Heart of Mid-Lothian:" she appeared much affected, and shed

Misses Taylor and Copeland: she laughed as heartily at Fitzwilliam's Laird of Dumbiedikes, and Mrs. Brookes's Hannah Glass; but did not stay to see the afterpiece, which was the "Seven Champions of Christendom."

While preparations were ostensibly making for the approaching Coronation, I cheered myself with the probable and consoling idea, that the great influx of visitors from all parts of the empire to the metropolis *must* (as hope worded it) fill all the theatres. The people certainly came to London from all parts, as predicted; and in many public streets, especially of an evening, the multitudes were countless; but they came not to see plays, or pantomimes, or melo-drames; but to buy finery, and sport it at the Coronation. In common with all other theatres of the metropolis, I received an order to open the Surrey at the expense of the crown on the evening of the national festival, and was paid three hundred pounds, which came most opportunely: the tickets issued for the occasion were nearly three hundred and fifty pounds worth, all of which were admitted; and never did so crammed an audience conduct themselves with more decorum. We presented them with "The Two Gregories," "Harlequin Hoax," and "The Seven Champions;" and when all was peaceably c[illegible] public had departed in

excellent temper, a select party of us supped on the roof of the theatre, from whence we had a capital view of fire-works in various quarters of the town, and sang catches and glees to the astonishment of passengers below, who, not being able to see us as we sat behind the parapet, and played bo-peep from among the chimneys, could not imagine from whence the voices emanated.

I cannot but confess, that while we, literally elevated, were loyally, and to appearance all merrily enjoying the festivity attendant on our sovereign's inauguration, which had, for that evening, put a considerable sum of money in my pocket, I wore a heart as sad as my countenance appeared the reverse. The expiration of my lease was fast approaching; I had expended more than four thousand pounds on the theatre before it had opened; and as, with the exception of the two seasons which produced "Don Giovanni" and "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," not one had repaid me within many hundreds,—I had reason to anticipate the approaching troubles shortly to be detailed. I had written for the Surrey alone upwards of eighty pieces, (I mean during my lease, and not recurring to the great number I had written and altered when manager for Mr. Elliston,) all of which had met with appla [illegible]
been oblige [illegible]

more: the public press had been liberal in its commendation, sometimes profusely so; and through all my difficulties I had scarcely, in nearly seven years, even that number of differences in opinion with any of my establishment. "The Times" newspaper, on one occasion, gave an imitation from a French journal of a list of the wants of every principal theatre; accusing one of wanting a pretty actress, another a good farce, a third an opera, a fourth a leading hero, &c. &c. In enumerating the *desiderata* of the London theatres, "the Times" found some material defect in each; and when it came to the Surrey, simply said, "This house only wants the power of removing itself, like the Loretto Chapel, a few hundred yards nearer the habitable part of the town." Another journal, standing very high with the literary part of the metropolis ("The Guardian"), contained the most flattering remarks prefatory to a critique on "Wheels within Wheels," produced during the last season.

With respect to the footing of friendship on which I stood with my performers, it was displayed in pleasing and genuine colours on each of two social meetings we instituted in every year. On each Twelfth Night the company accepted [illegible], wine, cold refreshments, and a dance from [illegible] and on [illegible] of July, (the anniversary of

my opening of the theatre,) the whole establishment gave Mrs. Dibdin and myself a supper. At not one of these twelve family meetings (for so we all considered them) did any one instance of disagreement arise; and though, on such occasions, we never separated till five or six in the morning, I never witnessed, at a meeting of above sixty individuals, an instance where hilarity, aided by no want of the grape, so little exceeded the limits of decorum. Many of the leading London actors and actresses have been visitors on these occasions; and on one evening, among others, Mr. Dowton, who was our guest, expressed himself in most animated terms, and at considerable length, on his witnessing a scene unprecedented in patent theatricals. The newspapers of the day did great justice to the *esprit du corps* which dictated his brotherly harangue.

But all this time I have left myself and my *convives* on the roof of the Surrey Theatre, celebrating the coronation on the 19th of July. We separated as soon as St. Paul's clock struck the twentieth, and resumed our labours in the evening. We were closed on the 8th of August on account of the death of Her Majesty Queen Caroline; re-opened on the 13th; and, after reviving and producing many pieces for the benefits, temporarily closed our season on the 10th of September [illegible] t be

followed by better business: I had immediate recourse to my study, and wrote a pantomime called "Harlequins Hum, Mum, and Strum;" altered my comedy of "The Birth-day" into a burletta, under the title of "The Veterans;" and made an opera of Tobin's "Honey-Moon," which I re-christened "The Duke's Bride;" and with these pieces, and some additions to the talent of the company, we re-opened on the 22d of October. My only novelties of this short season were the mock melo-drame of "Leonora, or the Spectre on the White Horse;" and a farce called "The Man and the Monkey:" the other pieces were revivals of "Obi," "Valentine and Orson," &c. &c. When we shut up on the 4th of December to prepare for Christmas, for the following season I engaged Mrs. Glover, Miss Macauley, Miss S. Booth, and other additional forces, Mr. and Mrs. Fitzwilliam having, after the 10th of September, engaged themselves with Mr. Elliston at Drury-Lane. Mr. Fitzwilliam was the first performer I engaged when I took a lease of the Surrey: his salary, at first, was four pounds per week, which I increased, without solicitation on his part, yearly, till it amounted to eight guineas: Miss Copeland I also engaged at four pounds per week; raised it to five on the very first night she played; and, as in the forn[illegible] case, without solicitation, con-

tinued to raise it until it amounted to eight guineas: their benefits (each two in the year) had been, in the highest degree, profitable; and I hope, with all my heart, their subsequent engagements proved more pleasant and productive than any my theatre could afford them.

As I now began to speak of relinquishing the short remainder of my lease to any one who would give a trifling consideration for it, Miss Taylor mentioned an offer of high terms she had received from the then proprietor of the Cobourg Theatre, but which she would by no means accede to without my concurrence. I need not add, that I gave my consent, most heartily, to her acceptance of the terms, as I always had done, when asked, where the real benefit of any performer was in view. Miss Copeland had formerly, during a recess, received the same permission to perform at the same theatre; and when Miss Taylor's new engagement was made, her brother (a respectable solicitor of Furnival's Inn) apprised me of it in the following very handsome manner:—

15, Furnival's Inn, Oct. 15th, 1821.

"Sir,

"I beg to inform you that my sister has this day closed with the proprietor of the Cobourg Theatre for a term of three years. In

by my sister expressly to state that she shall ever remember your kindness to her at the Surrey Theatre with the sincerest gratitude, and that she can never forget that she owes a great deal to you. I assure you it is a gratification to the feelings of my sister to assure you of this, and to bid you a most respectful farewell.

"I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"JAS. TAYLOR."

The Cobourg Theatre had, under a former management, strained every nerve, not merely to compete with me in fair opposition, but to anticipate my intended productions, engage my performers, and *per fas aut nefas* to win the game I ever had played fairly for. One instance will illustrate this:—Mr. Huntley, while acting with me, was offered higher pecuniary terms to go to the Cobourg; and, I presume, his "poverty, and not his will," consenting, he went; but shortly afterwards, conceiving himself ill treated there, he came back to me, assured me he was at liberty, and asked for a re-engagement. I fairly told him my friends thought he had been premature in quitting his former engagement; and I consented to receive him only on a repetition of his word of honour, that he was free from his subsequent arrangement with my rival: this

pledge he gave, and voluntarily addressed the audience, on the night of his re-appearance at the Surrey, stating the uniform good treatment he had received from its manager, and, to use his own words, assured them that "he came back, like 'the Prodigal Son,' to a home he never again would willingly secede from, and that he threw himself on the public indulgence:" he was received with acclamations; and, *credat Judæus!* I was next day served with notice of an action by Mr. Chippindale, solicitor of the Cobourg Theatre, on the part of the proprietors, for *seducing* their principal actor,—who, in fact, had been seduced by them from me,—from his lawful engagements. This action, after they had incurred some expense as to its process, these gentlemen, more wisely than they commenced it, allowed to drop.

My proposed system of dramatizing popular classic novels, as "Tom Jones," "Roderick Random," "Humphrey Clinker," &c. having appeared to be successful, a similar plan was immediately adopted at the Cobourg Theatre. The romance of "Florence Macarthy," as before stated, was advertised by that house the very day after that on which I had given public notice of it; and with respect to the productions of the (supposed to be known) Unknown, the Cobourg

always waited for the announcement of my selections to follow them instantly by choice of the same subjects. On the other hand, when the proprietors engaged Mr. Booth, (whose performance of Richard the Third had brought them into a legal quarrel with the major theatres,) that gentleman came to me, before he had played three nights at the Cobourg, in great agitation of mind; and, hastily writing his name at the bottom of a sheet of paper, desired me to fill up the *carte blanche* with my own terms of engagement, stating that he had been so ill treated at the Cobourg, that he would not play there again: this I declined to do, as unfair to the other theatre; advised him to complete his arrangements there; and afterwards I promised willingly to treat with him. Yet, I am quite certain, had I taken advantage of his fervour of the moment, it would have been a considerable sum in my pocket, as well as the means of procuring me another notice of action from the worthy solicitor to the Cobourg. After all, the opening of the Cobourg was a lamentable circumstance to both parties: it was the ruin of my incipient good prospects, at an expense to itself of still greater magnitude: I lost nearly eighteen thousand pounds at the Surrey; and Mr. Glossop, senior, assured me that he was twenty-seven

thousand pounds *minus* by the Cobourg. The latter theatre had so splendid a command of money, that my finances,—which were (as Mr. Colman's letter humorously pictures) "like a thin man in a strait waistcoat,"—could not, by any means, keep pace with the richer pecuniary resources of my competitor.

December 26th, 1821, saw us once more in the field, commencing with a new burletta I had written, and called "Jack in the Green,"—a serious piece from the pen of Mr. Ball, effectively depicting incidents in the well-known tragic story of "Count Ugolino;" and my "Man and the Monkey." The Northern magician now produced "The Pirate;" and *pirating* as much as I could of it, my shadow followed his substance very rapidly. The powerful assistance of Mrs. Glover gave a consequence to this effort; and though so many of my great guns had gone off from the Surrey, we had a field of artillery remaining, which, whether it brought money or no, assuredly gained great credit. I followed this by the melo-dramatic spectacle of "Sir Arthur," which I founded on a French theatrical romance of which the critics spoke in flattering terms; and having now created a list of about one hundred and eighty stock-pieces peculiar to the Surrey, I was enabled to make a

change of performance almost every night,—a perfectly novel system in minor theatrical management; recollecting, as many do, the period when six new pieces, and sometimes less, were quite sufficient for a whole season; a change once a month being thought the very acme of industry in authors and conductors.

On the 19th of March, 1822, I closed the theatre, and, in consequence of an arrangement with Mr. Watkyns Burroughs, finally quitted it. The engagements entered into by this gentleman, he, after making every possible and praiseworthy exertion, found himself unable to complete; and, after many efforts, he relinquished the undertaking, and is now in America. The theatre has, from that period, been under five or six different managements, no one of which I fear has been able to make it a productive speculation.

Although I finally quitted the Surrey in March, it was part of our agreement (which I fulfilled) that I should write a comic piece on the strangely popular plan of "Tom and Jerry;" but it was to be a distinctly original disposition of those three eccentric characters: it was in three acts, containing about forty songs, or rather *chansonnettes*, and, as I am informed, was particularly well received: my brother, at the same time,

wrote one for the Olympic Theatre; Astley's had produced one prior to the Adelphi; and now every minor theatre had a "Tom and Jerry" of its own. I have to confess what, if a fault, (and a very great one,) I cannot now help; it is, that I was offered the plan of the "Great Adelphi Tom and Jerry" before any piece of the kind had appeared, and the assistance of that very original artist, Mr. Cruikshank, in producing it: but I could not prevail on myself to approve the subject; and, pitifully erroneous as I was, imagined the public would do any thing but patronise what I conceived would be a marked disrespect towards them, and one which would deprive me of that good opinion which the magistrates had yearly honoured me with in expressing their praise of my theatrical administration.

I should speak of the Surrey Theatre with more regret than I do, if I could tax myself with any thing in the shape of negligence in any department of its concerns, which might be connected with what I professed to understand. I have laboured fourteen hours a day for months together in that theatre, and did not discover, till too late, that people in confidential situations, on the other side of the curtain, were not labouring so much for me as for themselves. The

situation of one person in particular (to whom I paid three pounds per week, and who, after modestly refusing an advance of salary the last year, charged me, in his parting bill, with the very sum he refused) was so lucrative, that, after his departure, I was offered a hundred a year by a person for permission to do the duties of it gratuitously; and actually received the advance of three hundred pounds from another to fill it during the less than two years which then remained of my seven years lease.

A short time prior to my relinquishment of the Surrey, Mr. Morris, of the Haymarket Theatre, called, and made me proposals to undertake the stage management of the Haymarket Theatre; but the terms he at first offered being, in my view of the subject, very inadequate to the arduous duties of the situation, which were to include my undertaking to write a one-act piece for the opening of the theatre, a two-act farce, and a three-act drama, in the course of the season,—I declined entertaining his proposals of remuneration, which were two hundred pounds for the season: on which I received a letter, offering the addition of a clear benefit each year;—Mrs. Dibdin to be also engaged as superintendant of the ladies' wardrobe, though at a very trifling salary. On these conditions, I

closed with the principal proprietor of the Haymarket for three seasons; the other proprietor, Mr. Winston, (as I was repeatedly informed by Mr. Morris) totally disapproving the engagement.

I was now, at the pressing instances of all my friends, to undergo a few weeks of the most painful suspense and mental suffering I had ever experienced, prior to my appearing in the Court of Insolvency, which was the only, though (as it has since proved) very inefficient means to release me from the embarrassments occasioned by my Irish and Surrey speculations. I had never indulged either my family or self in any one thing which could be termed extravagance; I never kept a horse or carriage of any kind in my life; and the few friends I saw at my table were invited on meetings connected with business, which, in many cases, could not be otherwise settled. When prompter and manager at Drury-Lane, these unavoidable official dinners were a very heavy tax; the large sum I expended on opening the Surrey, kept me without capital with which to go to market; and I was consequently obliged to pay in proportion (or rather out of proportion) for what credit the theatre wanted. I never could wish (as Mr. Elliston frequently observes) to fix a

maximum for the purchase of talent; but I have always thought no performer, even of the lowest class, should receive less than a certain sum. To expect theatrical duties to be correctly performed, and decent appearances made, with change of linen, &c. for every evening, for fifteen shillings per week, I have ever looked on as unreasonable in the extreme; and though there are numbers in all the "great grand theatres" (at *one* especially) engaged on such terms, I considered it a duty incumbent on me to do something better for the rear-guard of my company; nor did I ever hesitate, where I discovered rising merit, (whether in respect to talent, or where I perceived zeal for the theatre and attention to business) to add, unasked, to the pecuniary appointments of the individual who thus appeared to deserve distinction. I inflicted no fines; yet absences from rehearsals, or mistakes before the audience, were never so rarely known as in the six years I had the misfortune to be lessee of the Surrey. When neglect *did* take place, I made it a point to be public and particular in thanking, by a placard in the green-room, those who had been present and attentive, leaving out the names of the very few who were not; and I scarcely ever knew this method fail: in one or two instances, where it did, (as in cases of

inebriation or quarrelsome disposition) I, in as friendly but firm a way as possible, exerted my right of parting with the individual: in short, I did every thing in my power conscientiously to merit the confidence of my professional brethren, as well as the patronage of the public: the first I have reason to hope I obtained in a considerable degree; and the latter I have as little doubt I should have been honoured with most substantially, had not a third theatre unexpectedly risen in a circle which, as the epicure said of his goose, was perhaps too extensive for one (theatre), but not large enough for two;—and this said third theatre, armed at all points with that mighty engine *gold*, which was scattered about in more than abundance, not only to promote its own plans, but to oppose and paralyse mine: in consequence of which we both failed. There was also another at first imperceptible, but finally ruinous cause of embarrassment,—which was, that when in preparation of a new piece, from which much was expected in the shapes of profit and reputation to the theatre, a hundred pounds might be wanted,—it was, for a long time, to be repeatedly had, but upon terms of interest, including numerous free admissions to the theatre, which the lenders ought to be as much ashamed of having exacted, as *I* am, at this mo-

ment, of having paid; and all this time the receipts were less than the expenditure through every season except the two I have mentioned. Countless stories, in general as false as they were varied, have been told of the sums I owed to my actors at the period when I left the theatre: every needy man among them made a plea with his creditors, that if he had the great arrear due to him from me, he could pay every one; and, in general, those who made similar assertions were persons to whom I owed nothing, but who were often in advance of their salaries: some honourably authenticated instances I shall give of this, without unnecessarily exposing the names of the parties, after this preliminary observation,—that although the number of my performers and band considerably exceeded eighty, the sum of seven hundred pounds would have paid the arrears of all; and what would have satisfactorily liquidated that demand, (arising from part of the consideration I was to have received,) I did not receive. I may add, that but for the increase of certain salaries, (voluntarily on my part,) more than the balance of £700 would have been in my favour rather than against me. I should also mention, that on an arrear of rent, the very landlord who had (as the Drury-Lane committee must remember) fol-

lowed me in Drury-Lane Theatre, night after night, and absolutely pressed me into the service (as I may truly call it) of his theatre, seized, and had appraised, in his own favour, the scenes, wardrobes, chandeliers, (for which latter alone I had paid five hundred guineas) machinery, piano-forte, and even kettle-drums, together with all the furniture, dressing fixtures, and every appurtenance, which had cost me between four and five thousand pounds, for the sum of thirteen hundred; and now enjoys an advance of rent for a furnished theatre, which, when I leased it, had to boast of only four bare walls.

The instances of misrepresentation as to payment of salaries I was about to mention, out of a considerable number, are of sufficient notoriety to find many who will acknowledge their truth, on my only hinting that a talented pantomime actor, who had many years acted in my harlequinades at Covent-Garden, had so frequently represented his absolute want of payment from me to a legal gentleman, that the said lawyer called on me to remonstrate. I convinced him, before the whole company, how much I had been traduced; and, as it was on a Saturday, prevailed on him to stay, where, without being observed, he could see Mr. Rorauer, my treasurer, pay the

salary of the person in question from the treasury parlour window, which I ordered to be done in this instance for the greater publicity; and heard the complainant, on being asked what was owing to him, reply "*nothing at any time*." The second instance relates also to a pantomime performer of celebrity now no more, who went to play at Bath. The above-named Mr. Rorauer had given this person an acceptance of mine to get discounted, no part of it being due to him, but as a matter of business, for which he made a charge. I never got back the bill or money for it; but the gentleman, displaying the former in the Bath green-room, stated it to be his due for arrears from me. One of our hospitable Somersetshire relatives happened to be present, and wrote me an account of the transaction; and after the ensuing post, the detractor was unexpectedly and publicly confronted with such a disproval of his assertions (which he little imagined had reached my ears), that he had good reason to regret his unpardonable and unprovoked conduct. The next and last painful proof I shall mention of incorrect, and in this instance very ungrateful statement, came to my ears through a reputable attorney of Lambeth, who brought me the letter of an actor high in my favour, and who, it was well known,

was, at that moment, considerably in my debt; and who could, notwithstanding, venture to state in writing (and *res scripta manet*), that the reason why he had not paid certain instalments, was that I had long been in arrear with his salary; and not only with his, but with those of others; for that I had, for a long time, placed the whole of my company on half salaries. As at that period I did not owe one farthing to any one in the establishment, my feelings were not so susceptible as they afterwards had reason to be on this subject; so I merely took the lawyer into the green-room, where I placed my actor's open letter over the fire-place, and left the gentleman to hear the comments of the actors, which they not only gave most freely in censure of the guilty, but, in the evening, placed the following placard over the calumny I had posted; and I beheld the handsome testimony of their feelings with as much surprise as pleasure on the first time of my entering the room that evening:—

Surrey Theatre, Wednesday Evening, July 8th, 1818.

To T. Dibdin, Esq.

"Sir,

"We hasten to express to you our feelings of astonishment and indignation at the

conduct of Mr. * * * towards you; being convinced that he has received from you more than friendship,—almost the kindness of a father. We beg to assure you, that we will take every means in our power to refute all such false and cruel assertions.

"We have the honour to remain, Sir, your obedient servants,

"B. Cordell—W. Leonard—H. M. Cann—R. Smith—W. Clifford—T. Ridgway—E. Fitzwilliam—T. Burton—Elias Solis—E. Hart—J. Bynam—G. Giroux—J. Bartlett—W. Gutteridge—H. Lee—J. Wilson— — Fawcett—F. Watkins Burroughs—J. Kirby—W. Lee—Henry Gattie (of the Theatre-Royal Drury-Lane)—W. Adcock—H. Wilkins—D. Johnson—M. Howell—A. White."

The female performers had expressed great anxiety to subscribe their names also; but it was not thought necessary by the gentlemen, whose voluntary testimony, as well as that intended by the ladies, will ever live in my most grateful recollection.

I shall feel relieved (and so will my readers) when I have done with this subject; but I must steadily face it now, as I trust I did formerly. The nature of an insolvent's schedule is (the greater misfortune of the times) too

generally known to need much explanation; but it is still to be hoped there are thousands (out of whom I may have half-a-dozen readers) who are not all aware of what the law requires; and the grossly cruel exaggeration of the amount of my debts in one or two public prints renders it an act of justice to myself to state what they ought to have been made to amount to, instead of the sum total which misrepresentation (I cannot think accident) placed at the bottom of the list. I have stated, and can prove, that my combined losses in Dublin and in the Surrey amounted to considerably above eighteen thousand pounds: I am not in the situation of a man born to a fortune, and who had spent it: I never had one: I am not in the situation of a man who, exerting himself on his *entrée* into life, is assisted, in however trifling a way, by friends or relatives: I never, after quitting school, and being apprenticed, received a shilling even of pocket-money from any one; and the instant when (through the success of my run-away pursuits, for which I abandoned all hopes of the civic crown,) I had a guinea in my pocket, I shared it equally with those of my relatives, who, being now no more, cannot be injured by what I feel obliged to state in answer to the frequent questions of "What

did you do with 'The Cabinet?'" "how did you spend the 'Jew and Doctor?'" "to what vile uses have you put 'The Heart of Mid-Lothian?'" &c. &c. &c. &c. &c.

I resume, that while I did not owe a shilling, my first care (as has been seen) was to redeem my civic rank, and expiate, by purchase, my having run away from a trade I detested; a master, who did not then "affectionate" me at all, but who, as well as myself, has lived to see his error; and a society of uneducated shopmen, apprentices, and porters, to whom I did not dare speak, even in the common colloquy of the society I had left at my humble, though classical school, for fear of being considered affected, ridiculously pedantic, or perhaps insane. My next care was to assist all my relatives, as far as was in my power, as I have said, and can prove, to the amount of at least three hundred a year, for many years; and *hinc illæ lachrymæ*, but they are not tears of sorrow. In some cases, I could not avoid it; in other cases, I would not avoid it;—and, as George Colman's angel of a Yarico says,—

> Were it to do again, again I 'd do it.

I could not then, after having a wife, some seven daughters, and two sons to support, bury,

and otherwise provide for, in addition to my attention to the claims I have mentioned,—I could not, I repeat, have saved much. The reader will remember that I had not a friend to give me a guinea, except what I got of my uncle's legacy of £100, by which I lost seven years' interest of another £100; my aunt's £10, and gold-headed cane: he will recollect also, how an author, who has to court actors, (and give one, and an eminent and rich one too, beef-steaks and Madeira repeatedly, when he swore the doctor told him that he would not be able to support the fatigue of studying and acting a certain part without such a shield from the gout) must occasionally lessen, by such means, the profits of his brain distillery: but what I did save, by a desire (and I think a laudable one) to profit by my vocation, in two reasonably fair adventures, was lost, and my debts amounted to about sixteen thousand pounds.

In this place it is necessary to insert a most painful, but necessary parenthesis, in answer to much anonymous, and more impertinent nominal inquiry: I never offended my father in my life; he once wrote to me that he was proud to see in my brother and myself "two such promising young men;" but I never received a shilling from him. My mother, (bless her memory!) and her mo-

ther, gave me all, except the insignificant premium which Cecil Pitt, of Dalston, paid Sir William Rawlins on my account.

I tell this story vilely and irregularly, because my feelings are very effervescent, and it is with much effort I have summoned courage to read it over again and correct it. I aver solemnly, that my debts did not amount to more than the sum I have stated: one newspaper (but being, every day I bring out a farce, at the mercy of those very proper correctors of bad dramas, but very improper representers of insolvents' affairs,—I may not name the journal) had the goodness to state the amount at the impossible sum of £37,000. It is but fair, ladies! who will be horrified at my supposed dishonesty and depravity, to inform you (for gentlemen are too mercantile to sympathise) how this mis-statement might be *very* innocently made.

It is almost unnecessary to say, that in the list of his debts, an insolvent is expected to put down all he owes; but that all is not half, nor in some cases a tenth part, of what he *must* put down in addition. If he owe a man £100, and another man is security for it, they are each put down creditors for that sum, which is therefore doubled: should insolvent be security for another man, that security must be entered also as a *bona-*

fide debt, whether it may be paid by the real debtor or not. And, lastly, "though not least," if insolvent accept a bill, every person, through whose hands that bill may pass, though there were fifty of them, (and you seldom can ascertain half their number,) must be entered, as far as you know, each as if sole creditor for the original sum: so that if I give my acceptance, at any date, for £100, and, in the course of the time for which it is drawn, it should happen to pass through the hands of thirteen people, it ought to be entered in every name, amounting in the total to £1300. Judge then, ladies! with your natural leaning to the merciful side; and, gentlemen! *cum grano salis*,—whether the next representation you may read of the amount of an insolvent's supposed delinquencies may not be over-rated as was mine.

I cannot yet quit this heart-harrowing theme without the relation of a particular circumstance, which my solicitors, and another active legal friend of mine can vouch for the truth of. On the day of my dearly-bought emancipation, (which did not emancipate me at all,) a very, very old theatrical friend, (better known to the public than myself, and who is to be added to my list of deaths,) who has often been mentioned in this narrative, sat beside me, in the

same melancholy predicament, waiting the award of the court. I say distinctly, and without fear of contradiction, that, in the hearing of many, who crowded round to see, *à la John Bull*, whether two theatrical men so situated looked like any other two men,—a person told me and my friend, that, on the payment of a certain *douceur*, (not a very considerable one,) our appearance in the court should not be noticed in the next day's papers. I do not want to take credit for romantic feeling; but, by the Providence that has supported me through all my troubles! I felt a glow on my face, and a twinge at my heart, to hear that what might (or might not) so naturally affect my reputation with my friends in Somerset and Wilts, &c. &c. (London knew all) was to be bought and sold at a sum I had not in my possession, or which, if I had, ought to have been given to my creditors. I (as well as my friend) declined the purchase of desired concealment: the proposal was again made next morning to my legal Lambeth friend, while digging in his garden; and on his pleading my inability, in defiance of all tare and trett, the gross, instead of the net sum, was inserted; and for days, months, and years, many of my friends pinned their faith (and may still do so, against my assertion) on the invaluable, but

often tremendously mischievous privilege of assertion, enjoyed by that benefit,—that evil,—that monarch, not only of these kingdoms, but of the whole world,—*the British Press!*

But the worst circumstance attending this supposed relief from embarrassment remains to be told. In a concern so extended and intricate as that in which I had been engaged, many tradesmen's bills had been mislaid by my former treasurers, or lost, or purposely withheld by tradesmen themselves, who foresaw the claims they could make, if their accounts were not in my schedule; and as soon as I was supposed to be free, innumerable little demands sprang up, which if not (either through inability on my part, or doubt of their legality) instantly attended to, were put into the hands of Clifford's-Inn practitioners or jobbing attorneys, who soon contrived to make the most of them, and in some cases ran them to double and treble the original demands. My last master carpenter (a very honest Irishman of the name of Johnson) could have prevented many of these claims from smiths and canvass and timber-dealers, but he died rather suddenly; and little tradesmen, who had served the theatre under his direction, had no check to whatever account they happened or chose to recollect. There was also another

source of imposition in many cases, where notes of hand had been given in the common routine of business: those notes, although entered to the names of the persons originally possessing them, could no longer be traced, till after I had taken the benefit of the insolvent act; when Jew holders of old acceptances (and who, in many cases, had bought them on speculation) started up in so many directions, that what with paying, compromising, and being put to legal expense, I have ever since regretted I did not retain the theatre, which I gave up from a principle of honesty; that I did not renew my lease, which I had friends to have done for me; and trust to the public for the event, of whether further unremitting exertion might not have rendered the step I took unnecessary:

> Learn to be wise by others' harm,
> And you shall do full well.

I am now old enough to know that I had better have "stuck to stocks," and, like my departed uncle, have drawn up my curtain in Moor-fields. The author of the Prologue to "The Apprentice" kindly exhorts young people to believe that

> A shop with virtue is the height of bliss;

and I, by experience, feel that no troubles are so severe as those we (however remote the ori-

ginal cause may be) have brought upon ourselves. Truly is it asserted, that it is *le premier pas qui coûte:* no distance of time can make right that which in the beginning was essentially wrong: therefore pause, children of delusive expectations! before you quit the way pointed out to you by parental affection, or the care of those who have natural "authority over you;" lest thoughtless deviation lead you to feel the truth of Sheridan's assertion respecting folly of a different kind;—that often for our eventual benefit "the crime carries the punishment along with it."

CHAP. X.

1822—1823.

"On voyoit plusieurs des hommes sévèrement punis, non pour les maux qu'ils avoient faits, mais pour avoir négligé les biens qu'ils auroient dû faire."—*Fénélon.*

"By turn and by turn each vantage gain'd,
And by turn each vantage lost."—*C. Dibdin's Young Arthur.*

Preparations for opening my first campaign at the Haymarket—"Bill of Fare"—"Love Letters"—"Abyssinia"—Mr. Elliston and Drury-Lane—"Morning, Noon, and Night"—Erskine on "The Laplanders"—Emery's funeral—Produce new opera—Speech on closing the theatre—A very private box—*Little* matters—Commence my fifth campaign at Drury-Lane—Earl of Essex—Gigantic fall of "Gog and Magog"—"Reasons and causes, look you"—My trial before the privy council of Vinegar-yard—"Chinese Sorcerer"—My benefit—Liberality of principal performers—Temporary adieu to Drury-Lane—Mr. Kean.

I now began to prepare *seriously* the *comic* pieces I was to write against the opening of the Haymarket; and having written a one-act prelude, which I called "The Bill of Fare, or Inquire Within," and a farce in two acts under the title of "Love Letters,"—I took my seat with becoming gravity as manager, for the first time,

in Mr. Morris's room, and read the first of those two productions to the ladies and gentlemen on Saturday, June 8th, 1822, this being, as Joey says in "The Merry Mourners," "my first piece of sarvice in my new place." I should premise that before the farce of "Love Letters" could be accepted, I was summoned to a private reading of it with Mr. Morris and Madame Vestris, and its reception by the proprietors was to depend entirely on the lady's decision. My having been a minor, but absolute, sovereign, for nearly seven years, did not predispose me to be much in love with this truckling to petticoat government, however I may adore all the dear creatures who conceive themselves qualified to assume it; and still less was I reconciled to such arrangements, when I recollected that Mr. Colman, when *he* asked me to write for the Haymarket, subjected my attempts to no other ordeal than that of the public: but, alas! the New Haymarket was not the Old Haymarket, in more meanings than one; and so I found it: but all in good time. This beginning was inauspicious, inasmuch as I soon perceived that my own jugdment and experience were not "by no means" to be exercised, or my own discretion trusted to on any one point. Madame Vestris deserves thanks for the manner in which she supported

her character of umpire on this occasion; and as her decision was completely in favour of my first effort to please, I shall always hereafter consider her an infinitely better judge of "Love Letters" than my new "great grand" governor of the little theatre, who, when I read him the same farce in my own room at the Surrey, did not deign to move a muscle.

Mr. Parry composed the music of "The Bill of Fare," which was well received on the 15th of June, at the opening of the theatre. The play was "The School for Scandal;" and Mr. Charles Kemble being suddenly prevented from playing Charles Surface, by the death of his brother, Mr. Stephen Kemble,—I wrote to my old friend Russell, who, at my instance, readily undertook to perform as a substitute for Mr. Kemble. "Love Letters" came before the public on the 24th of the same month, and their reception justified Madame V.'s kind opinion of them. I was now to be prepared with a three-act piece, and immediately set to work from an idea put in my head by reading "Bruce's Travels;" and soon finished an opera under the title of "Abyssinia." On the day on which I had written the closing line, Mr. Morris invited me to a *tête-à tête* dinner in his room of business; and, by way of dessert, I was to read my piece. We sat down

to an excellent bill of fare (not mine), and a glass of very drinkable wine, which I frankly owned I approved very highly; and Mr. Morris as frankly declared that "that was more than he could say of my opera, for he did not approve of it at all." I could only reply, "Very well, Sir, then I'll try another;" and next day I literally commenced writing "Morning, Noon, and Night." One day, while engaged on this task, I received a note from Mr. Elliston, which led to a negociation respecting the stage management of Drury-Lane Theatre. My friend Erskine, late my musical composer, and leader at the Surrey, wrote to know when and how he was to be compensated for his music of "The Laplanders." Mr. Morris, on seeing this letter, seemed to think (as the piece had never been acted) that Erskine had no claim at all. I represented (very respectfully) that this was not a case, either with respect to Erskine or myself, in which a play had been presented by author and composer to the manager for his approbation; but that, on the contrary, the said manager had ordered it for a specific purpose, and taken both author and composer from other avocations, to execute this "job," (as my dear friend Mrs. Mattocks formerly called my Frogmore farcette,) and that, consequently, some remuneration ought to be

made; and much less than Erskine afterwards obtained, properly and kindly applied, would at that time have satisfied him. As for me, I seemed to be considered as totally unconcerned in the matter; and Mr. Morris (as he did on most subsequent occasions) begged to dissent from my opinion. I advised Erskine to wait, in hopes some opportunity of professionally serving him might occur in Mr. Morris's establishment, by way of *salvo*; and there, for that time, the matter ended.

In August I was one of the many sincere mourners who attended the funeral of the late John Emery: we had always been on terms of the sincerest friendship, and made our *débuts* at Covent-Garden in the same season. I have three very beautiful drawings of John's now in my eye, which he executed at Brighton on purpose for me; for with his pencil, as well as in his acting, he was what Dowton emphatically styles "a powerful artist;" and he was, moreover, no contemptible musician.

In the beginning of September, "Morning, Noon, and Night," after having undergone the ordeal, first of Mr. Morris's opinion (I did not dine with the proprietor this time, for I thought it ominous), and then Mr. Liston's,—was produced, and (although so late as on the 9th of

September) was acted with applause eleven nights. The season now soon drew to a close. Mr. Elliston played Sir Charles Racket for my benefit; and after having, during my first campaign at the Haymarket, in addition to the already named pieces, superintended the production of the elder Mr. Colman's "Suicide" (a revival); Mr. Kenney's "John Buzzby;" "Peter Fin," by Mr. Jones, of the Theatre-Royal Edinburgh; "Family Jars," by Mr. Lunn; and the usual number of stock pieces, in which my own "Rise and Fall" and "Harlequin Hoax" were included; and having, besides, had the pleasure, by order of the proprietors, of several times reading the part of Polly to Miss Paton, who made a most successful *début* this season,—I closed the theatre, on the 15th of October, with the following address to the audience:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am desired by the proprietors to present their sincere and grateful acknowledgments for the very liberal patronage with which you have honoured the season terminating with the performances of this evening. They beg to assure you that the *long* vacation we are doomed to suffer shall be employed in every exertion to render this house and its establishment worthy a continuance of your generous support. During our brief campaign, we have had to thank your indulgence for the ample success of every novelty produced; and, among the new candidates who have ad-

ventured on these boards, a young lady (Miss Paton), whom your discriminating award has raised to the highest rank of musical pretension, will ever have to recollect that her first efforts were encouraged by the friends and patrons of the Haymarket Theatre. The performers all wish to express their high sense of the kindness you have shown them; and, I hope, ladies and gentlemen! it may not be deemed intrusive if I take the liberty of thanking each of them, who have by their zeal, alacrity, and talent, carried into effect every intention of the management. In the name of those performers and the proprietors, as well as humbly in my own, while taking a grateful leave, I am to wish you all happiness and prosperity till the return of summer shall renew our hopes to meet, and ardent efforts to merit, the future sun-shine of your favour and protection.

The liberty I thus took in thanking the performers gave offence to the proprietors: "it was," as I was told, "*unusual* to do so," and ought not to have been done. Things had gone on in tolerable harmony during the past four months, when it is considered that there was scarcely a point of business, or a proposal on my part, which had the honour of being sanctioned by the approval of my principal. I had (as all stage managers used to have) a private box; but, like the guineas given to the Vicar of Wakefield's daughters, which they were on no account to change,—the entrance to it was strictly prohibited to any one but myself, or

wife, who was always too busily employed in the theatre to be able to avail herself of it; and no other person was, on any occasion, to use it. One evening my two boys were refused admission, though I assured the poor terrified box-keeper that a proprietor of a Royal Theatre must, of necessity, be more of a gentleman than to give such orders; but I have been a mistaken man through life. I, however, felt it necessary to take my boys and myself home to Leicester-square, and stated to Mr. Morris in writing the reason why I could not think of attending the theatre under such circumstances; nor can I, to this moment, imagine how I had deserved this sort of treatment, being totally unconscious of any given or intended offence, unless indeed it was having (after I had been "bid not,") stuck up some of my official lists with wafers, and thereby disfigured the gray whitewash of my nine-feet square bran-new manager's room. After a half satisfactory note from Mr. Morris, and some angry conversation, the subject dropped. But now to greater matters.

I had engaged with Mr. Elliston, with the proviso that my Drury-Lane engagement should be subservient to that of the Haymarket: this conditional circumstance Mr. Elliston candidly acknowledged before the counsel, afterwards

acting as arbitrators between himself and me; while, at the same place, and before the same gentlemen, Mr. Elliston's treasurer testified that no conversation of the kind took place. I assure my readers that Mr. Elliston was in the right; and the day after the Haymarket closed, my Drury-Lane duties began.

As the splendid alterations at the latter theatre were not completed, we were, at first, obliged to rehearse at the Olympic. Workmen were in Drury-Lane till the moment for admitting the audience; and never were the public presented, on their entrance, with a more magnificent *coup-d'œil*, than the architectural taste of Mr. Beazely, and the liberality of the lessee, afforded them.

Just after having made my new engagement at Drury-Lane, I received a gratifying proof that the memory of my former impeded administration there still lived in the memory of one of the noble personages under, and with, whom I, at that time, had the honour to act. The Earl of Essex had just before written to me at the Haymarket, to know whether a private box could be had for one of Liston's attractive nights: I had the pleasure to procure his Lordship one, which he next day thus did me the favour to acknowledge:—

No. 32, Upper Brook-street, July 19th, 1822.

"Dear Sir,

"I am extremely obliged by your kind attention: I assure you, we were highly delighted with Liston; and I was happy to see a full house, which you deserve, for you have a strong company. If I judge rightly from your note, you are again going to Drury-Lane Theatre; which I rejoice at. We flourished under your banners; but when other arms were quartered, defeat was certain. I shall be most happy to hear that Old Drury is once more triumphant; and more so if you are in its management. I have not set my foot in a London theatre, I believe, three times within the last three years, having been so much at Paris; but shall make you a visit soon.

"Believe me, yours most faithfully,

"ESSEX."

We opened on the 16th of October, with "The School for Scandal," and "The Poor Soldier," preceded by an address written for the occasion by Mr. Colman;—the receipt was £563. On the 6th of November we anticipated a piece in preparation at Covent-Garden, by

bringing out "The Two Galley Slaves." On the 4th of December, a new farce called "Old and Young," taken from the French, by Mr. Poole, was produced, to introduce Miss Clara Fisher, who certainly astonished the town by her very extraordinary acting. The 19th brought forth an opera called "A Tale of other Times," taken from my "Princess and No Princess," and Sir Lumley Skeffington's "Ethelinde;" it was acted but once: and on the 26th of the same month, I produced the only pantomime out of two-and-thirty which proved a total failure. This predestined victim was called "Gog and Magog, or Harlequin Antiquary;" and was intended as a vehicle for alternate successions of views in London as it *was*, and local portraits of London as it *is*. It is perhaps aiming at too much, when we try to give consistency to any thing so ridiculous on the face of it as a Harlequin pantomime; but I was very anxious, in this instance, to effect something which should inform children, while it amused them. Mr. Elliston did every thing in his power to accomplish my wishes: Mr. Nasmyth was engaged, at no small expense, from Edinburgh, to assist his pupils, Messrs Stanfield and Roberts, in the scenery; and Messrs Luppino, Marinari, Hollogan, Andrews, Read, Seyward, and Williams,

were also employed. When the pantomime was formally read in Mr. Elliston's room, to him and the various artists, Mr. Nasmyth highly complimented its consistent plan, and the connexion between the subjects of its tricks and changes: Mr. Elliston was also very warm in his approbation; so much so, as to call it the best sketch, *sui generis*, he had ever met with; yet shortly after, Mr. Ridgway the Harlequin, Mr. Paulo the clown, Mr. Bartlett the pantaloon, and others, freely declared that there always seemed to them to exist some counteracting power with respect to the machinery and trickery, that appeared determined to prevent the success of the changes. It may not be generally observed, nor perhaps thought worthy of observation at all, but it is certainly true, that the best pantomime ever constructed depends on strings, and flaps, and traps; and, if machinery does not work, the pantomime must fail. I was placed in Drury-Lane, as I had been at the Haymarket, against the good wishes of a man so much in power, that Mr. Elliston's orders were not held by him in any consideration, and nothing ordered by me, at the instance of Mr. Elliston, was properly attended to. I have known in the best of the golden days of good Mr. Harris, and glorious Covent-Garden, all the

strings of pantomime machinery cut and destroyed in one night, the kettle-drums perforated, and all the cloth on the entrance doors to every avenue hacked to pieces, through the most trifling jealousies among mechanists about precedence in making a pantomime trick; and I am sure that Mr. Harris, as well as myself and others, knew perfectly well (although we could not prove it) who were the infamous perpetrators of all this: but in a certain stage of preparation for the production of the pantomime, there was danger in adopting strong measures. With respect to "Gog and Magog," I have only to say that not one single attempt at change of machinery was properly or effectually executed: a few mistakes would have been natural, though they would nevertheless have much annoyed me, because I was totally unused to similar failures; but difficult as it is to find *all* the machinery of a pantomime succeed, (which, however, many and many a time it has been my fortunate lot to witness,) yet I aver, that it is almost as difficult to make it *all* fail; and I hope, with all my heart, that "Gog and Magog" will ever remain, as it was on its first appearance, a *solitary* instance of such ill fortune.

My graver readers may probably feel indig-

nant at my attaching so much importance to the success or failure of any thing so insignificantly inconsequential as a harlequinade; but theatrical people all know that the success or failure of such an entertainment at Christmas has a very serious, and almost incalculable influence, on the proceeds of the remainder of the season; and as the failure of the pantomime (owing to causes with which I was totally unconnected) was made the groundwork of proceedings on the part of Mr. Elliston, which compelled me eventually to have recourse to legal investigation—I think it due to myself to state fully and fairly, and to protest most solemnly, that the ill success of this pantomime was neither to be attributed to the piece itself, nor to any inattention of mine. The scenery was excellent; the music was by no means what I wished, nor was it original, nor furnished in the way I had been used to; and instead of a new overture, as advertised in the *programme* of the day, the overture written for "Don Giovanni in Ireland,"—a piece unsuccessfully performed some time before,—was unceremoniously played, and as unceremoniously hissed, as was the first sample of scenery, however undeserving of condemnation. The instant the curtain began to rise, Messrs. Ridgway, Paulo, and Bartlett, declared, on their ex-

amination before the arbitrators, that their decided opinion had been *ab initio* (*they* said "from the beginning") that the pantomime was not to *do*: besides which, independently of pre-ordained causes from the *imperium in imperio* where my supposed management was concerned, there happened, most unfortunately for Mr. Elliston, as well as myself, to be a law-suit pending between Mr. E. and a performer of the name of Webster;—in defence of which action, Mr. Elliston, most injudiciously, (as even my very warm and worthy friends, Winston and Dunn, declared; therefore don't imagine, reader! that *I* was so treasonable as to affirm it) subpœna'd the prompter, clown, harlequin, pantaloon, and myself, for several days, out of the very short time we had for rehearsals; for, most unfortunately, the opera of "A Tale of other Times," already mentioned, kept possession of the stage every morning, while we were obliged to practise in the box-lobby saloon, without the collateral assistance of scenes or machinery. We were, besides, kept whole days at Guildhall awaiting this trial; and in consequence, I, who, under the superintendence of Mr. Harris, (as Mr. Farley and many others can testify) had been used to at least three weeks or a month's rehearsal on the stage, had, in this instance, not

five days. I saw it was a forlorn hope; I saw the carpenters were inefficient; and that one set of men rehearsed the machinery one day, and a new set was sent to rehearse it on another: I stated all this, and was desired by Mr. Elliston to harangue the men, and promise them a supper and all possible encouragement in case of success: they were almost all strange faces; they paid very little attention to what was said; and the result justified my worst expectations. At Covent-Garden, Sadler's Wells, and my own theatre the Surrey, the carpenters had always worked both for me and my brother with a zeal bordering on enthusiasm; but here they were not under my control: I might punish, but I had no power to reward. Mr. Saul was the nominated master carpenter, but one of the seven managers was the real one;—and that one, on Mr. Morris's authority, was not my friend.

I am quite aware that the dignity of history ought not to condescend to such *little* particulars; but, unfortunately for me, I have, perhaps, half a dozen years yet to live, and my children and wife to provide for; and as the want of success in this single instance was made a cause of disqualifying me from future stage management, I look on it as the most important feature

in my professional life, and I must still have the presumption to insist on introducing a few lines more on the subject. There was yet another cause which operated strongly against the interests of the pantomime.—Legitimate plays, being composed of words, can be studied by the individuals who act in them, at home; and when the component parts come together tolerably well on the stage, very few rehearsals are really necessary to ensure their effectiveness. Theoretical instruction is not enough for a pantomime; in fact, it is by practice only that it is made fit to be produced. My journal of rehearsals is now before me; and I see thereby, that three mornings out of four, assigned by me for practice of the pantomime, were dedicated, by order of other commanders, to "The Tale of other Times," which, being composed of singing and speaking, with little or no action, might, with much more propriety, (and no injury whatever to its probable success,) have been rehearsed in the saloon; while poor "Gog and Magog," on whom the lessee professed to fix all his dependence, might have had fair play, even if one-third of the usual repetitions on the stage had been granted. Had my Guildhall giants only been allowed to have met at the usual hour, and to go to dinner when they heard the clock strike one, they would never have dwin-

dled into pigmies. Mr. Elliston, to a certainty, felt so convinced, at the time, that my trickery had not fair play, that he assembled the whole body of his carpenters, after the first representation, and told them so in good set terms; and excessively impudent and gross were the said carpenters in their replies. So much did Mr. Elliston feel for the depression I laboured under, in consequence of this undeserved defeat of my very anxious endeavours, that although he was only just recovered from a very serious attack of indisposition, he went home with me each night after the pantomime, (which lasted but three,) and granted me many an hour of kind condolence.

These nights of friendly attention on the part of my master were Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. On the Sunday, I took a walk with my sons, before dinner, to see the skaiters on the Serpentine; and had just got home, extremely cold, fatigued, and not at all indisposed for dinner, when I found a verbal message from Mr. Elliston, wishing to see me immediately at the theatre. I obeyed, of course; and met, in the manager's room, a sort of inquest, or court martial, or court Thespian, or what you will, calculated to frighten a poor pantomime projector out of his senses. I believe there are instances, when great state criminals have been pri-

vately examined previous to legal arraignment,—that they have, in consideration of former official rank, been asked to take a chair; but in this case, I must do the honourable judges so much justice as to observe, that all idle ceremony was dispensed with, and I found myself unconsciously, as well as unexpectedly, placed in the situation of an offender, who was to be interrogated. Supporting myself with one hand on the table, while the weight of my person half leaned on the opposite leg, I felt impelled to say something, though I really did not know why: Mr. Elliston had left me as a convivial friend at the Lord knows what hour in the morning, *God blessing me* all the way down the stairs of No. 5, York-street, Covent-Garden; and now, when I entered, in obedience to his sudden summons, he appeared as if surrounded with the combined authority of Bow-street, Westminster-hall, or the Cockpit; his Chancellor of the Exchequer on one side, First Lord of the Treasury on the other, and Mr. Soane, the author, present as *amicus curiæ*. By-the-by, there was an official gentleman then in Drury-Lane, (whom I may not name because he is in office now,) who used to designate the theatrical cabinet ministers, Winny Jenkins, Lord Liverpool, and Mr. Robinson. The *tout ensemble* of the august

assembly, on this occasion, formed an array so imposing, (I hope I have not chosen an erroneous word,) that I swear by every hope I entertain of yet producing a pantomime as good as Mother Goose! if they had worn gowns or wigs, I should never have been able to have supported my trembling and terrified frame, but must have sunk into the very centre of the earth!

After a most awful pause, I was obliged to ask whether this was a committee, or a court of inquiry, or for what reason I was called before the personages assembled. Mr. Elliston said "his friends" were anxious to hear on what grounds the pantomime had failed; but, on my most peremptorily (like a *second* Charles the First) disclaiming the authority of the court, and declaring myself amenable to Mr. Elliston, and to nobody *but* Mr. Elliston,—Mr. Soane went away; Mr. Dunn asked some question about the carpenters; and Mr. Winston did the wisest thing he possibly could have done,—he said nothing. Mr. Elliston then observed, it was necessary that they should have a new pantomime directly; and asked whether I should object to Mr. W. Barrymore's being engaged for such a service? I replied, "Certainly not;" because I knew Mr. Barrymore had been previously engaged, and that arrangements were

making to allow him his own master carpenter, a new assistant, mechanists, additional pantomime actors in pantaloon and clown, &c., in short, every assistance that my unhappy pair of giants had been deprived of: and, besides all this, there was to be no "Tale of other Times," or any protracted law-suit at Guildhall, to impede the rehearsals. As the newspapers and play-bills acknowledged "The Golden Axe" as a new pantomime, and lauded the author for the very short time in which it was produced, I am bound to believe them; but I certainly had before seen "Harlequin Woodman, or the Woodman's Dream," with "The Golden Axe," at Astley's Royal Amphitheatre; and, as certainly, had seen most of the comic business and changes exhibited by the same actors at the Cobourg Theatre: but the new carpenters, &c. taking with them the good wishes and best exertions of Mr. Winston, the acting manager, had little difficulty in carrying a predetermined point.

On my return home, I had scarcely related to my alarmed wife (who had previously handed me a smelling-bottle,) the tremendous inquisition I had undergone during this Sunday trial of my patience, which had finished by a resolution, *nem. con.* that the next pantomime should have

all the aid mine had wanted,—when Mr. Elliston paid me another friendly visit in York-street. Now, a wife is not allowed by law to be a witness for her husband in a court of justice; and, in consequence of the over-persuasion of many friends, I submitted to refer my subsequent law-suit with the lessee to the opinion of arbitrators, on the ground (as I was told) that a wife may be heard in a husband's cause before an umpire. However, after my better half had been squeezed through the delightful pressure of attorneys' clerks, clients, bailiffs, and straw-shoe securities, which form a Serjeant's-Inn mob in term time, and had been sworn in due form before a judge (that is, behind his chamber door), and when she had, after more than one day's waiting at counsel's chambers, been admitted into the solemn presence of the arbitrators;—it was debated, in her presence, and the point decided, that a wife *cannot* be admitted as evidence in a case of arbitration any more than in a public court; and thus my sole power of corroborating my own testimony, and contradicting that of Mr. Elliston's principal witness, (which I completely could have done,) was rendered nugatory. But although a wife may neither tell the truth in favour of her husband *coram judice*, nor before an umpire,—I may

certainly call for her testimony in this book; and beg I may be understood here to assert upon her authority, (no slight one in my house, I can tell you, reader!) in addition to my own, that Mr. Elliston, on coming into the room as full of friendly smiles as if nothing had occurred, declared I had made a very proper and spirited defence before the privy council of Vinegar-yard; or, to use his exact words, had defended myself most manfully; and, soon after the frank expression of this opinion, took his leave in perfect good-humour. Yet, when Messrs. Winston and Dunn were asked by the arbitrators at what period they believed me to have lost the confidence, professionally, of Mr. Elliston, they dated that calamity from the miscarriage of the twin Goliaths of Guildhall.

On the 4th of January, we produced the comedy of "Simpson and Co." on the 6th, the pantomime of "The Golden Axe," which was received with great applause; and I must do Mr. W. Barrymore the justice to say, that he honestly expressed his astonishment, in the manager's room, that I could have produced a pantomime at all with the men and *matériel* I had been blessed with. On the 14th, a translation, under the title of "Augusta," and another on the 15th, called "Deaf as a Post," culled from

the source whence we derive the favourite farce of "The Deaf Lover,"—were brought out, having been sent from Paris by Mr. Poole: to each of these pieces I was required (in common with a dramatist of more consequence) to lend some assistance; and, whether or not for the benefit of the author, cheerfully subscribed my quota. On the 31st of March, I produced "The Chinese Sorcerer," a magnificent melo-drame in three acts. In the getting this piece up, (as it is technically termed,) I was allowed to go to a very liberal expense, and the exercise of my own superintendence *alone*, even to the drilling of the soldiers and supernumeraries. The piece was a combined translation, with very material alterations from three distinct French melo-drames, each of which, as a single piece, had been eminently successful: it experienced a reception brilliant as itself; and no spectacle ever boasted more of all the glitter and splendour which wardrobes, property-rooms, or the gilder's pencil could supply: it was acted twenty-three nights.

Mr. Elliston having been again seized with symptoms of violent indisposition, was suddenly ordered by his physicians to Leamington Spa; and my benefit, which ought to have been (by agreement) on an early Monday, was appointed

for one of the leading days of Epsom races:—I declined the night; and had a later and a worse assigned me, by which I consequently realized little or nothing. In addition to two hundred and twenty guineas, (the usual expenses of the house,) I was charged *extra*, in the phraseology of the treasury,—

	£
To Miss Stephens,—one night	20
To Mr. Young, ditto	20
To Mr. Liston, ditto	20
To Mr. Kean, ditto	10
	£70

I most gratefully record my acknowledgments to Miss Stephens, Mr. Young, and Mr. Liston, who, in the handsomest manner, refused to receive one shilling.

On the 14th of May, a farce was brought out with the eccentric title of "One Pound Ten Shillings and Eightpence, if Quite Convenient," which was not found to be the case with respect to its repetition; and, on the 16th of June, in conformity with my agreement, I quitted Drury-Lane, in order to re-commence my stage-management of the Haymarket Theatre, little

imagining (as will be seen hereafter) that an interdiction awaited my return to Drury-Lane. The awful circumstance, however, (such are the revolutions of the wheels within wheels by which the wheels of the "great grand" theatres are regulated) did happen, as will hereafter be detailed; but I must take leave, for the present, of the "national house," with the relation of an incident connected with the exercise of my managerial duties.

It was one day imagined, from information given by one of his friends, that Mr. Kean was going to enact at some little distance from London. To prevent this, I was desired, by the reigning authorities, to write to him, requesting that he would play on that evening at Drury-Lane, although it was not one of the nights on which the house (according to agreement) was to have advertised him. I subjoin, by way of *finale* to my tenth chapter, his jocosely characteristic reply to my requisition, which was presented to me with the greatest good-humour:—

"Dear Dibdin,

"Imagine you had written this request to the late Mr. Kemble, and guess his answer:

he was patient; I am irritable. He would have said,—'I cannot be made a stop-gap of the property I have been so long supporting,' &c. &c I, Edmund Kean, say,—'if I play on Monday night, I 'll be ———.'

"E. KEAN."

T. Dibdin, Esq.

In addition to the pantomime and "Chinese Sorcerer," I wrote, by request of Mr. Elliston, (and a very difficult subject it proved in execution,) a kind of farce in three acts, long enough to occupy a whole evening, which was denominated "Old Nick," (not the "Old Nick" of Mr. Dubois,) and produced at the Olympic, (then Mr. Elliston's theatre,) for the purpose of displaying the versatile and ventriloquistic powers of the celebrated Mons. Alexandre. This piece was acted throughout the whole of Mons. Alexandre's ensuing season. The trouble he gave me in measuring him for every scene, fitting, trying on, and altering, was even greater than I had incurred in consequence of the most considerable of all the by-gone *brouilleries* arising out of "The Cabinet," "Family Quarrels," "Zuma," or "The English Fleet," put together: yet I was not considered as entitled to any remu-

neration, either for this non-descript drama, or "Kenilworth," which, with the question of the remainder of my Drury-Lane agreement, soon after became subject-matter for legal disquisition.

[library stamp]

CHAP. XI.

1823—1824.

"Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice."—*Shakspeare.*

Second campaign at the Haymarket—Pieces written and refused—"Summer Flies"—"Vicar of Wakefield"—Old friends from Scotland—Hits and misses—The Snow-storm—Close of the campaign—Princesses and performers—Remunerations and receipts—Mr. Dunn and Mr. Elliston—My abrupt dismissal from Drury-Lane—War declared, and legal hostilities commenced—Henry Cooper—Proposals of arbitration—"The law's delay, and insolence of office"—Visited by Mr. Morris, and why—A guinea to a shilling—Master nonsuited—"Saint Ronan's Well"—"India Pickle"—Mr. Botte—"Come if you Can"—Inauspicious commencement of my third Haymarket campaign—A tiresome chapter concluded by a still more tiresome but necessary digression.

I OPENED the Haymarket Theatre with a prelude taken from my comedy of "The Will for the Deed," which answered the usual purpose of such very unnecessary trifles as that sort of introductory pieces generally may be considered; but it was an old custom, and was not

to be dispensed with. A two-act piece was next to be produced; and I had offered Mr. Morris six or seven, all of which were peremptorily refused. One which Madame Vestris had expressed herself very willing to perform in, was a version of the French piece from whence the favourite *petite comédie* of "King Charles the Second's Merry Days" was afterwards so successfully written for Covent-Garden: another, an original musical farce, was proposed under the title of "Good News, or the United Service:" a third was a translation considerably altered, and peculiarly adapted for the Haymarket, from the French farce of "L'Hôtel Garni," so successfully parodied in "Sayings and Doings," and which Mr. Morris afterwards accepted a close translation of from his secretary, Mr. Ebsworth, acted as "Quite Correct:" fourthly, "The Spread Eagle," founded on an anecdote of Voltaire and Frederick the Great of Prussia, which has been acted most successfully as a burletta even with the limited means of Sadler's Wells: a fifth, since equally fortunate at the same theatre, was named "The Great Gentleman in the Little Parlour:" a sixth, (start eyes!) a three-act opera called "The Ring, or the Forest of Meudon:" seventhly, and lastly, to these may be added "Abyssinia," which has

also been honoured with complete success at Sadler's Wells.

Against all these determined refusals of every thing I offered, I strongly appealed to Mr. Morris, demanding reference to other authority: he named his own actors:

> Yet even their high arbitration I disdain'd,

for numerous reasons. All were aware of the monarch's predetermination, which it would not, in all cases, on their parts, be prudent to oppose; and all would, more or less, feel some interest, in spite of themselves, as to what they were likely to be asked to perform in the said pieces. After freely stating this by letter, I proposed Mr. Colman, whose opinion ought certainly to have carried some weight with it, though I still insisted on the privilege my experience gave me to ask for no other judges than the public; and if they condemned what I might produce, I proposed relinquishing my right to remuneration. The arbitration of Mr. Colman was flatly refused, on the ground that some differences of opinion already existed between Mr. Morris and that gentleman, as if it were possible that the judgment of the latter (on the supposition of his being willing to award it) would be for one moment influenced by prejudice against one party, or partiality to

the other; and a trial before the public was positively refused me. Mr. Morris then voluntarily selected "The Vicar of Wakefield;" a burletta which I had successfully brought out at the Surrey, written, in supposed obedience to Act of Parliament, in verse; and this was to be altered to an opera, provided Mr. Liston would perform in it, which he, on hearing it read, immediately agreed to do. But it is much easier to make an opera into a burletta, than successfully to transform a burletta into an opera: added to which, this selection of the proprietors had been acted at least fifty times, and completely worn out at the Surrey: in consequence of this, it was not at all considered in the light of a new production at the Haymarket, where it neither failed nor succeeded. Two days after our opening, a translation from the French, by Mr. Howard Payne, was acted under the title of "Mrs. Smith;" and, on the night following, my friend Mrs. Jones, from the Theatre-Royal Norwich, whom I have mentioned previously, (as will be remembered) at Harrowgate, Beverley, Manchester, Bamff, and Inverness, made her *début* as Lady Duberley in Mr. Colman's comedy of "The Heir at Law:" she was much applauded; and might have now been a favourite with that public who kindly received her, but

death unexpectedly deprived her family of a very praise-worthy and domestic individual. Her husband, my old Scotch manager, was engaged in the orchestra.

The 7th of July gave birth to Mr. Kenny's eminently successful comedy (from the French) of "Sweethearts and Wives:" it had been read and rehearsed while I was at Drury-Lane as an opera, when some disagreement, as to the appropriation of the principal characters, occasioned the author to withdraw it: this, however, was done with good-will on all sides, and the Drury-Lane opera became a Haymarket comedy.

Mr. Erskine, by a letter, renewed his claim to remuneration for the music of "The Laplanders:" Mr. Morris again declined to entertain it; and I repeated my advice of patience and forbearance to my old leader, to which he again submitted.

On the 2d of July, a farce in two acts, called "Spanish Bonds, or Wars in Wedlock," was consigned to "the tomb of the Capulets." I had ventured to offer my decided opinion, that unless the author, who was perfectly *incognito*, could be prevailed on to make some material alterations in the piece, which I pointed out,—it could not be long-lived; but my advice was treated as obtrusive, and totally disregarded.

On the 9th of September, another farce, entitled "The Great Unknown," relative to which a similar opinion, expressed by me, was treated by Mr. Morris with similar indifference, shared the same fate: the principal incident in this piece arose out of a grand snow-storm; and the piece having been withdrawn on the first night of representation, I received the following epigram the next day from a dramatic writer of first-rate celebrity:—

Impromptu sur le "Great Unknown,"—farce sifflée; dans laquelle il y a une scène d'un tems de neige.

Que dit-on, sais-tu,
De ce "Grand Inconnu?"
Hélas! on dit
Que la neige est tombée,—et puis
La pièce, aussi!

MEZZETIN.

On the 7th of October Mr. Ebsworth produced a melo-drame from the French, named "Rosalie," with much success; and on the 15th I closed the theatre with the following address; which, as the one I had spoken the preceding year had not been honoured with the entire approbation of the two proprietors Messrs. Morris and Winston,—was partly sketched out for me by one or both of these gentlemen; and probably a third sage, learned in the law, and more so in the

affairs of the Haymarket Theatre,—had "a finger in the pie." The most extraordinary circumstance attending it was that Mr. Morris *(mirabile dictu!)* was pleased with my recital of it, and actually thanked me publicly in the green-room before the astonished actors; it being (as far as regarded me or my efforts) his "first appearance in the character" of a satisfied master:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour of appearing before you as representative of the proprietors of this theatre, to announce their very sincere thanks for the liberality with which you have rewarded their efforts to deserve your favour;—efforts which, as they have been unremitting, so have they been successful beyond their most sanguine expectations. The seasons of this theatre are necessarily short; but, in proportion as they are so, the proprietors, ever desirous of rendering them attractive, leave to their larger and graver competitors the weightier cares of the tragic drama; happy if they can add to the stock of your innocent enjoyment, and promote good-humour, gaiety, and laughter. Of the dramatic novelties they have produced for your amusement, the greater proportion has been honoured with a share of your approbation nearly unprecedented; and, ever obedient to your wishes, and confident in the justice of your decisions, they have instantly and unhesitatingly withdrawn such productions as have failed to obtain your perfect sanction. With regard to the performers, the earnest wish of the proprietors has been to collect a company in some degree commensurate with the distinguished patronage with which this theatre has at all times been honoured. In this respect

they trust they have succeeded to your satisfaction; for, together with much provincial talent, they have offered you a very considerable portion of the first comic and vocal strength of both the winter theatres. Such arrangements, ladies and gentlemen, will be made, not only for your amusement, but for your comfort and convenience, against the commencement of the ensuing season, as the proprietors trust, will entitle them to a continuance of your patronage. And now, ladies and gentlemen, I beg leave to express my own thanks and those of the performers, for the uniform favour and indulgence with which you have crowned all our attempts to please you; and, for the present season, we gratefully and most respectfully beg to take our leave.

On one occasion during the season, I thought I had really deserved the thanks of the proprietor in a much higher degree, but had the mortification to incur displeasure. Mr. Morris sent for me one afternoon, to request that I would dress and attend early, to light Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent to her box, and remain in waiting to light Her Royal Highness to her carriage at the close of the evening's entertainments;—a duty which (gratefully remembering the former patronage with which the Duke and Duchess had so frequently honoured me at the Surrey) I was most proud and happy to have an opportunity of performing. When the royal carriage was called up, the chariot of a female performer occupied the space before the stage-door entrance by

which the Duchess was to quit the house. The charioteer, who, I presume, must have been under the influence of the jolly god, refused to draw off, (although informed that the Duchess was coming out,) to allow the other carriage to come up; and Her Royal Highness, attended by Captain Conroy, (who very properly felt indignant at the coachman's rudeness,) was obliged to stand in the street till I sent for an officer, on which the fellow drove off. I ventured to apologise to Her Royal Highness, whose affability and condescension formed a strong contrast to the want of common civility with which she had been treated. Lest it should be deemed by some that I make a parade of my devotion to this branch of the Royal Family, I shall, in addition to former recitals of patronage at the Surrey Theatre, exhibit the particularly kind way in which that patronage was conferred; for which reason I reserved the subjoined letters for this period of my narrative, in preference to inserting them in the order of their respective dates:—

Kensington Palace, 11th Oct. 1819.

"Captain Parker, having submitted to the Duke and Duchess of Kent Mr. Dibdin's letter of this date, is now directed to assure him, that they will make their arrangements to

be at the Surrey Theatre about ten minutes before eight o'clock, on Monday evening next, the 18th, so as to be able to enter the theatre immediately after the 'Italian Wife' is closed, and before 'Inkle and Yarico' commences; so that neither the public nor the performers may suffer any inconvenience from the period of their arrival. Should Mr. Dibdin have any copy of 'Inkle and Yarico,' as intended to be represented that evening, Captain Parker is very sure it would be particularly acceptable to their Royal Highnesses to be enabled to peruse it. Captain Parker is further desired to express the pleasure their Royal Highnesses derived at seeing, on Saturday evening, Mr. Dibdin's humorous afterpiece of 'What Next?' (at Drury-Lane,) and again to thank him for his polite attention, in sending the two copies of it for their perusal. In concluding, Captain Parker begs to express his sincere regret at Mr. Dibdin's severe indisposition, which he can assure him both the Duke and Duchess were no less concerned to hear of."

Kensington Palace, 14th Oct. 1819.

"Captain Parker has had the honour of receiving Mr. Dibdin's letter of this date, and laying it before the Duke and Duchess of Kent,

with the accompanying play-bills, and cards for Monday next, and the copy of 'Inkle and Yarico,' for which he is directed to convey to him their Royal Highnesses' best thanks. He is further directed to repeat, that they will make a point of being at the Surrey Theatre, on Monday evening next, a few minutes before eight o'clock, so as to enable the first piece to be closed, and that they may enter the theatre immediately upon the curtain dropping after it. Captain Parker is directed to express the satisfaction their Royal Highnesses have derived from learning that Mr. Dibdin's health is beginning to be restored, and the hope that, by Monday next, it will be completely established, so as to enable him to witness the performances of the evening, the results of which they hope will be a bumper."

It will not be wondered at if, on my return to the interior of the Haymarket Theatre, I very warmly denounced the misconduct of the operatical Jehu, and stated to my master that the mistress of the coachman ought either to discharge him, or not suffer him to drive her in future to the theatre, there to offend its patrons a second time. This was very coldly received; and on my expressing how much the interests of the theatre might

suffer, and those of the lady also whose servant was to blame, should the circumstance find its way to the newspapers,—the answer, given in a very particular manner, was,—"it will not get into the papers unless *some one* chooses to *send* it." It was impossible to mistake the implied meaning of the emphasis laid on particular words, and this paved the way to more of those altercations which every week (not to say every day) produced.

At the close of the season, I received the balance of my salary as stage manager; but as no piece of mine had been accepted but "Summer Flies" and "The Vicar of Wakefield," which it was urged had not been productive,—I was desired to name some friend to whom the matter might be referred: I named Mr. Morris's particular friend and solicitor, Mr. Williams, who always appeared actively alive to all that passed in the theatre. To him I sent a gentleman, who took the trouble of stating how many pieces had been promptly written and as rapidly refused, and represented my right to the money which was in the house on the night of my benefit, and the further sum of £100, as mentioned in my agreement. After weeks of discussion, fifty pounds were all I could obtain, for which I signed a receipt, bearing a very different meaning from

what I imagined; for when it came in court, it was argued to include all former transactions between Mr. Morris and myself (but this a jury did not allow); whereas I meant it to relate only to "The Vicar of Wakefield" and "Summer Flies."

It should be observed, that in every difference between Mr. Morris and myself, I was always reminded that Mr. Winston had opposed himself to my engagement; and I had many good and solid reasons for supposing that the same opposition extended to myself and my arrangements at Drury-Lane; the rather as having parted (*pro tempore* as I thought) in a friendly way with Mr. Elliston, I, in the course of the Haymarket season, received the following note from Mr. Dunn:

"Committee Room, Drury-Lane Theatre,
Thursday, August 7.

"Dear Sir,

"I wish for five minutes' conversation with you here on Saturday next, at any hour in the morning most convenient to yourself.

"Dear Sir, very truly yours,
"W. DUNN."

I replied,—

"Dear Sir,

"Unless it may be convenient for you to write your business, I shall be happy to see you at the Haymarket Theatre any time on Saturday from ten till three: I am preparing, and have nearly finished, what is expected from me for Christmas next at Drury-Lane; and, as Mr. Elliston is in town, shall be glad to receive specific directions from him as to my articles as stage manager, either directly from him, or through you.

"I am, dear Sir, very truly yours,

"T. Dibdin."

This was succeeded by a formal visit from Mr. Dunn, ending in a still more formal and formidable annunciation that Mr. Elliston had no further occasion for my services at Drury-Lane. This resolution (as undeserved as unexpected, but very much, as artists say, in keeping with former incidents in the picture,) I asked to have in writing, at the same time reminding Mr. Dunn that he was a party to my engagement for three years: his reply was, "Yes, I am your witness." I immediately consulted my deceased friend, the late Mr. Henry Cooper, barrister, who, as counsel, as-

sured me, that I had only to inform Mr. Elliston of the appeal I meant to make to the law, and he would see the propriety of saving expenses which must ultimately fall on him. I gave notice that I was ready to perform my part of our engagements at Drury-Lane; and on receiving a repulsive answer, gave another notice of recourse to legal redress: and here began the pleasures of litigation. In the first stage, references were proposed, and that two counsel should be chosen, (one on each side,) to name a third, who should hear both parties and decide: to this I agreed; but from week to week we could get no counsel named to meet Mr. Cooper; and for a time the matter rested, as it for the present must do here, till it comes again in its proper place. I shall leave it with this observation: the ostensible reason assigned by Mr. Elliston for his abrupt determination was my incapacity as a manager. Mr. Elliston had experienced, when he engaged me at the Surrey Theatre, (where he proclaimed me a "godsend,") how far I was capable of my duties: he subsequently was four years with me in Drury-Lane Theatre, while I was prompter and manager under every possible discouraging circumstance; and after that, he saw me six years at the head of my own theatre, and

again as manager at the Haymarket; and on all these proofs, *sought me out*, and *solicited* my co-operation, which, had he for an instant supposed me inefficient, he never would have done.

Another law-suit, in which, happily, I was in no way concerned, procured me, in the spring of 1824, the unexpected honour of a visit from Mr. Morris, who had brought an action against Mr. Paton for breach of engagement on the part of his daughter; in consequence of whose non-age, her father, having made the agreement, had rendered himself liable to any penalty payable by her for non-performance. Mr. Paton's attorney had presented me with a guinea and a *subpœna* in the morning; Mr. Morris's attorney presented me with a shilling and a *subpœna* in the afternoon; and thus retained on both sides, Mr. Morris called to take me to a legal consultation in the evening. The trial came on next morning, and Mr. Morris was nonsuited.

In preparation for the next Haymarket season I wrote a play in three acts from the Great Unknown's "St. Ronan's Well:" Mr. Morris declined it: I presented him with a comedy called "India Pickle," which he also declined; and showing me two or three volumes of an old French novel, told me that Mr. Liston had desired a character founded on the comic hero of

that tale: I took the novel home; and in less than three weeks read Mr. Morris a three-act comedy written as much in the style of my original as possible. Mr. Morris approved the first act; recommended alterations in the two following; and concluded by saying, that if Mr. Liston would play the part, he (Mr. Morris) would accept the play. I read to Mr. Liston, while breakfasting at his own house, all that related to his part of the comedy; and regretting (I was going to say reprobating) the practice of always sending authors for him to sit in judgment on,—Mr. Liston said he would play the part. The play, however, was not accepted. I again pressed Mr. Morris to accept the prelude of "The Great Gentleman in the Little Parlour," for the opening of the theatre: he again declined it; and I translated a light piece from the French, which I called "Come if you Can," which Mr. Morris accepted, although I assured him it was every way inferior to the first-named sketch.

The theatre opened on the 14th of June with my prelude of "Come if you Can;" which, unassisted by any leading talent of the theatre, with the exception of Mr. Wilkinson, who made his *début* in a part totally unfit for him, (not through my fault: the part was written before I

knew of Mr. W's engagement, and it was ordered from higher authority that the new actor should appear in the prelude,) was, after the first night, laid on the shelf; and on the 17th, a farce from the French, by Mr. Poole, expressly written for Mr. Liston, was produced under the denomination of "A Year in an Hour, or The Cock of the Walk." At the end of the first week of the season, I sent, as usual, to the treasury for my salary, which was refused, on the ground that in consequence of the failure of the prelude, I was not entitled to any salary as an author, and that my appointment as manager was not a weekly one. When it is considered how frequently the Haymarket Theatre had derived benefit from my former labours, while Mr. Morris was a sharer in those benefits,—it will certainly appear a little out of that line of conduct which Mr. Harris, Mr. Colman, or Mr. any man, who, as Charles Incledon used to say, "*is* a man,"—to act with such *ultra* severity as the sovereign of Suffolk-place was pleased to do on this occasion; and it is the more extraordinary, because it stands as a clause of agreement, on the face of my articles of engagement for three years, that my salary as manager, as well as that of author, should be divided into weekly payments during the season.

My law-suit to compel Drury-Lane Theatre to perform its engagements with me was still pending; I had therefore received no salary through the winter; and besides, having my family to support, certain periodical instalments from actions, arising (as before described) out of former difficulties, promised on the faith of supposed honourable agreements,—had become over-due. However galling it was to my pride, (I hope not a very improper one,) I condescended to apprise Mr. Morris of my situation, and conjured him, as a father and a man, to prevent its ill consequences to me, not by any loan or favour, but by only ordering his treasurer to pay what was honestly due to me, including my not-to-be-forgotten and unrelinquished claim for the piece of "The Laplanders:" finding, however, no other answer than cool references to Mr. Morris's before-named solicitor, who was also his banker;—when a line to him in his latter capacity, even if it had carried a few pounds more of value than Mr. Morris might choose to think an old and favoured servant of the public, and a hard, very hard labourer in Mr. Morris's domain, deserved,—would have settled the matter amicably and honourably. And amicably we might have parted; for having seen how impossible it was, without daily submissions on

my part, (which I could not make,) that Mr. Morris and myself could proceed with any thing like unanimity,—I offered, on receiving what I claimed as my undoubted right, to relinquish the engagement altogether.

Now for a short digression—I have made but few, and do not think I shall again take such a liberty.—In writing my professional Memoirs, I have undertaken, with the greatest reluctance, the most painful task I ever submitted to. I have been actuated by no motives of hostility, no remembrance of injury, nor any mistaken notion of exhibiting things so as to tell in my own favour: I write not in anger; for I must entertain, or have entertained, a very sincere and affectionate regard for any person who could so far influence me as to provoke any long duration of that passion: it is therefore, in this instance, out of the question. To any doubts (which strangers to me may entertain) that mine are merely *ex-parte* statements, I oppose the publicity of every circumstance, unanswerable epistolary evidence, and legal decisions. Nay, were it possible for all these to be discredited, I ask any dispassionate being in the whole theatrical profession, and every one out of it who has been an observer of that profession, and of my uniform conduct in it for thirty-five

years, when they have read the brief remainder of this disagreeable part of my story,—whether I, who, while in power, made conciliation and indulgence my chief engines of government, was exactly the sort of man to be singled out for the treatment I had the misfortune to experience?

It may be asked, "How was it that Tom Dibdin, who wished all men to think so well of him, should, by such a strange coincidence, get out of favour with two public employers, each of whom had voluntarily sought his services?" To this I answer, without fear of contradiction, that, in the first place, we can scarcely say *two* employers, where one and the same individual, (I mean Mr. Winston,) who had property and power in one establishment, some interest, great influence, and still greater power in the other,—had, in both cases, declared his dislike *in limine* to my being engaged in either. I am utterly ignorant of the cause of this antipathy:

> Some men cannot abide a gaping pig:

But I am sure my "bagpipe" never sung i' the nose of Mr. Winston's pursuits in any way to their prejudice. If the Haymarket had turned out a bad speculation, he might (though not

with reason) have been angry with me for having been the cause of his purchasing a share therein: but it has prospered exceedingly; and though Mr. Winston (for what reason I know not, unless he was ashamed to acknowledge any but rich acquaintance) chose, before the arbitrators, to deny that I had so introduced him; yet his own written request, and the testimony of Mr. Colman himself, to which I fearlessly appeal, (and I think I might add that of Mr. Morris,) would amply corroborate what I have set down.

In the next place, and finally, no one will disbelieve that in all large establishments, from the administration of an empire down to the petty government of a ladies' day-school, there are always "souls of dough," (I don't allude to Mrs. Baker's company,) who, susceptible of every bad as well as good impression, and estimating the heads and hearts of their rulers by their own, think they render a service by imparting such impressions, re-moulded, and often distorted, into additional deformity to those above them, no matter at whose expense; and then again adopting all the great man's opinions (at least to his face) in the same pliable way,—they create feelings towards others which often produce more injury than is at first intended;

while they prove that the poor devils have no means of rising in their employer's estimation, but what are built on the prejudice of the more open and sincere. I believe, if, determined to act in the way I have seen some (who are now wealthy and high-placed professional individuals) act, I could begin life again,—I should very rapidly become high-placed and wealthy myself: but I appeal to Mr. Arnold, Mr. H. Harris, Mr. Colman, Mr. Elliston, Mr. Morris, Mr. Winston, and every individual of the sub-committee, whether I ever courted favour, particularly at the expense of another. The sub-committee will testify, I often got into momentary disgrace by steadily opposing any and every point I deemed inconsistent with the welfare of the theatre, or militating against the rights of the performers, of my coadjutor, or my own. The following letter, highly honourable to its manly writer, will prove that such conduct on my part was met more generously in Little Russell-Street, than subsequently in *Great* Suffolk-Place; and that however Mr. Kinnaird thought it his duty to act in opposition to me, for which he has often expressed regret;—his opposition was always that of a perfect gentleman and a conscientious man of business:—

"Dear Sir,

"I write this to say, that all hasty words, as affecting myself, I always forget: whenever they may be supposed to affect the party speaking them, it becomes still more a duty to consider them as not having passed; otherwise, men's after conduct would be guided by the heat of a moment, not by the colder periods of reason. With regard to what called forth your last words, and what called forth that cause, I cannot conceal from you that I think that if I hurt your feelings, you provoked the taunt. Let those who heard decide—by their judgment will I abide.

"Yours truly,

"DOUGLAS KINNAIRD."

Mr. Elliston cannot but acknowledge how frequently I have given offence by withholding my approbation of certain measures, and how often I have cautioned him, not secretly, nor *sub rosa*, against those whom he has afterwards acknowledged deserved his confidence much less than myself: he must remember one most particular instance of a "Dunn" (not the GREAT Dunn,) who superseded him in his interest in the

Surrey Theatre; and I am certain no two gentlemen existing can less accuse me than Messrs. Morris or Winston of interestedly endeavouring to *faire l'aimable*, or of sacrificing sincerity to make myself agreeable to either of them. I believe I yet possess the respect of Mr. Arnold, in consequence of having frequently argued, and amicably ended differences of opinion which took place between himself and Mr. Raymond *versus* their prompter; and notwithstanding the many times I have taken liberties, in the way of plain speaking, with both Messieurs Harris and Mr. Colman, I do not believe I ever lost an inch of ground in either of their good opinions. And now, gentle reader! "begging your pardon," (as poor little Appleby, well known to fame at Drury-Lane Theatre as a half-crazy messenger, used to say,—

> There are wheels within wheels,
> And Appleby 's a little wheel;—

And so am I; and pretty well have I been turned round: no matter!) proceed we without more comment: I am not writing an apology for my life, however necessary,—but my life itself.

CHAP. XII.

1824.

"One woe doth tread upon another's heels,
So fast they follow."—*Shakspeare.*

Sickness—Pleasure of making apologies to an operatic audience—Confinement—Correspondence—Calumny—A very great man—Letter from a prime minister—Delays and delights of litigation—"Kenilworth"—Newspaper correspondence.

Not being favoured with a very gracious answer to any of my reiterated requests, representations, and expostulations, addressed to my august principal,—I fell sick on the 21st of June, and uneasiness of mind retarded my recovery: I, however, ill as I was, went to the theatre on the 24th, but was obliged (with the ceremony of a written leave of absence) to go home again: I, however, returned in July, on the 28th of which month I had to address the audience four times in the course of one evening, in consequence of the indisposition of Miss Paton. I solicited, by order of Mr. Morris, permission of the audience

to substitute another play for that of "The Beggar's Opera," which had been advertised: this was refused: "The Beggar's Opera," and nothing but "The Beggar's Opera," would satisfy the public. I stated, that we had sent to many ladies, requesting them, on this occasion, to become the representative of Polly Peachum, without having succeeded in finding any of them at home: but this was of no avail; the patrons of the theatre declared that they did not care who played Polly, but a Polly they would have. I then respectfully expressed a hope that they would have the kindness to wait the return of other messengers who had been sent in all probable Polly directions: the answer, from all parts of the theatre, was,—"Certainly, we'll wait all night, or as long as you wish!" and a gentleman from the green boxes added, in a very audible tone,—"Sir, you may, if you please, play the part of Polly yourself, for a Polly we are determined to have." The situation in which I was that night placed (being extremely ill at the time) was worth half a season's salary; but my master did not even deign a clap on the back, nor one single word of approbation, condolence, or encouragement. The next morning I attended rehearsal, and had returned home to dinner in Cecil-street, when I was arrested, or, as

it is called by those kind persons, the lawyers,—*taken in execution*, in default of paying a trifling instalment, which, if Mr. Morris had seasonably given me one-fifth of what a jury afterwards compelled him to pay me,—would have been prevented.

As executions on supposed judgments confessed, are not bailable, and as non-payment of a single instalment rendered me immediately liable for the whole arrear,—I had but the alternative of raising the money or going to prison: the first I could not do; for if I could not get it from either of two places where it was due, *viz.* Drury-Lane and the Haymarket,—from what third quarter was I likely to obtain it? I therefore was incarcerated for a few days in Carey-street, and from thence transferred to the King's Bench till the ensuing Michaelmas-day. My family, previous to this, and during my imprisonment, had been existing on monies doled out in detached loans at 12, 20, 30, and even 40 per cent. on the security of a library, which had cost me many hundred pounds, and which I had been many years in collecting.

Return we to the gentle Morris! Mrs. Dibdin, unknown to me, besought him with tears she never deserved to shed, to pay me my own. "My solicitor!" was the reply. I shall presently

do myself the honour of saying a word to that solicitor, who is also a banker, and was lately a candidate to represent "poor devils" like me in parliament. As if to embitter my feelings while separated from my family, and removed from the industrious exercise of my endeavours, in a calling which I confess I never ought to have engaged in,—a report was busily propagated, by some of the dough people in the theatre, that the reason of my being suffered to remain in confinement, while my family were ill at home, was, that Mr. Morris had already advanced me £100. It was not the lightest of my troubles that Mrs. Dibdin was obliged to attend the theatre eight, ten, and twelve hours a day for a stipend I should blush to name, if its very insignificance were not so much to her honour. For forty shillings per week she was obliged to submit to all the magnificence of manner exhibited by a man, who knew her husband was in a prison, from which Mr. Morris, who had not been all his life autocrat of the Haymarket, ought, not in kindness, but in justice, to have preserved him; and she was moreover obliged to undergo so long a scrutiny before she could obtain an order to buy nine-pennyworth of ribbon to adorn the petticoat of any actress in the Haymarket, (except one who would and did have

whatever she pleased, *coûte qui coûte,)* that often more of the head proprietor's valuable time was lost than would have "paid the petty article ten times over." She, lately so respected at the head of her own establishment, was also subject to the condolences, questions, pity, wonder, and sneers of certain classes; but all could not break her spirit, till the encouragement and increasing report of this calumny,—"Mr. Morris had advanced Mr. Thomas Dibdin one hundred pounds." Imagine every body's astonishment when the tale was told! But the poison carried its own antidote; not a soul believed it. But that was not sufficient. My wife thought it her duty to brighten the walls of my enclosure by this intelligence, for any thing is better than lying torpid. Saying nothing of the source whence I then thought, and still think, this despicable attempt to make my master more amiable at my expense originated,—I wrote to Mr. Morris thus:—

"Sir,

"A very scandalous report having been propagated in the Haymarket Theatre, that I had borrowed £100 of you a few days prior to my being arrested, I take the liberty of calling on you, as a man and a gentleman, to say, in answer to this, whether I have received of you

one single shilling either as a loan, or on account of the present season. If I had, my present situation would have been prevented. But, though you declined stepping between me and the calamity that followed your refusing payment of my current salary, I do not believe you will permit a report to continue uncontradicted, which implies your authority for its existence, and which report is as cowardly as cruel towards an oppressed man, who does not (as I am sure you will freely admit) owe you one farthing. On the contrary, my claims on the theatre still remain unsatisfied.

"Your immediate answer will oblige, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"T. DIBDIN."

D. Morris, Esq., &c. &c. &c.

The following was Mr. Morris's reply:—

Theatre-Royal Haymarket,
2d August, 1824.

"Sir,

"In reply to your letter, I beg to state, that you have borrowed no money of me, nor has any sum been paid on your account from the theatre.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"D. E. MORRIS."

On the 20th of June I had written a very pressing letter to Mr. Morris on the subject of arrears due to me, re-stating the nature of them. His answer was,—" that my letter contained statements so unfounded, and was written in such coarse terms, that it was quite unnecessary he should reply to it;" and stating that " certain conditions alone could entitle me to the *due* performance of his agreement with me." To this I replied:—

" Sir,

" That you cannot reply to my letter, is not a matter of wonder; and, as to having written in coarse terms, I can only say, in your own words, ' your statement is so unfounded in fact, that it is quite unnecessary I should reply to it.' Again repeating your words, I have only to add that I require an honourable and gentlemanly performance of your own proposals, which alone can reasonably entitle you to fulfilment of the agreement on mine. I should have finished here, sir, but you affirm that ' certain conditions alone can entitle me to the *due* performance of your agreement with me:"—you allow it to be *due;* and completely agreeing with you in that respect, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

" T. DIBDIN."

An opportunity, at no small pecuniary sacrifice, presenting itself for my liberation, on condition of my resumption of my situation at the Haymarket,—before I concluded such arrangement, I luckily wrote to Mr. Morris, still mentioning my claims; and, without prejudice to them, simply stating that I could return to my duties as manager if he wished it; and never did I write (and only at the pressing instance of my friends) a letter so unwillingly: *mais la femme et les enfans—cause et raison.* The answer was

Brief as woman's love;

and rather more so, as I have had the happiness to find it: it very pithily said "he could not possibly comply with my *request*:" so the money-lender lost thirty per cent. on a projected loan, and Mr. Morris received "as follows:"—

"Sir,

"I have been re-perusing a copy of the note I wrote to you on Friday, in order to discover to what *request* of mine your answer alluded, and with which you 'could not possibly comply.' I cannot find one; and after the *liberality* and *kindness* I have experienced at your hands, I certainly must have been mad to have

bittock," followed, as manager, two Colmans, preferred one. My note informed you of my ability to return to the Haymarket, should such be your *wish*. I can only gather from your note, that it is *not*, for which I sincerely thank God. I assure you, sir, it was no *wish* of mine; but I did *my* duty in giving you the option, trembling all the while lest I should again be subjected to the daily and nightly degradations your service carried with it. As, fortunately, it is *not your wish* that these unmerited mortifications should be renewed, it is mine that the arrears due to me should be immediately paid;—arrears very hardly earned, and which, under the circumstances in which I was placed, I do not believe there is another man in a similar situation with yourself who would have withheld. Your early attention to this will prevent the disagreeable recurrence of any further intercourse between you and,

"Sir, your obedient servant,

"T. DIBDIN."

The next letter Mr. Morris received (for he did not deign to answer this) was from my solicitor; and so began another law-suit; and thus did I take leave of a theatre, in which it was no small honour to have, for two seasons "and a

and trod that stage as director which one Foote had trod before me. Nor was it less a credit to me to have been thought, at two distinct periods, worthy of directing, at another theatre, the performances over which a Bannister, a Kemble, and godfather Garrick had formerly presided.

In my differences with Mr. Morris, I had sought and hoped for the good offices of Mr. Williams, the before-mentioned attorney and banker of the Haymarket. In this case all litigation, and even misunderstanding, might have been prevented. I do not know what literary umpire was preferred by Mr. Morris to Mr. Colman, but I have a strong suspicion he might be found not a thousand miles from Pall-Mall East. Be this as it may, Mr. Williams, having behaved, in the outset of these wars, with great politeness to me, I wrote to request his impartial interference, and received that sort of reply, which, though I answered in very respectful terms, occasioned me to say, with a candour that merited the best thanks of Mr. Williams, that "I thought it fair to mention that I should probably have to submit our correspondence to the dublic." That a poor poet should be put in competition, or placed on an equality, in the eye of a banker, with the proprietor of a Theatre Royal

who was daily lodging the large product of Liston's Haymarket attraction in the bank of oriental Pall-Mall, was more than I could hope for; but that my very fairly apprising a gentleman of my intentions of publishing, so as to warn him off all epistolary ground, if he chose to take the hint, could be construed into "entrapping him into a correspondence,"—is more than all the lawyers, even of Gray's-Inn-square, could convince me of: I shall, however, subjoin the letter I was honoured with, for reasons given by its author, under a sincere declaration that there is nothing personal intended by it. Indeed I am the more astonished at our entertaining the slightest difference of opinion, when, in the course of our frequent interviews in the splendid back-parlour of the Pall-mall East bank, our sentiments respecting the breadth of Mr. Morris's liberality to authors, and other unfortunate dependents, were always in perfect unison. It will be observed, also, that the following is published by permission, or rather the implied request, or command of the learned and opulent writer;—and when it has been read, allow me to ask, what possible inducement could I have for entrapping Mr. Williams into letter-writing, or what ground can he have had to think it a fortunate circumstance that his correspondence would not meet the public eye?

To Mr. T. Dibdin.

"Sir,

"I have reason to congratulate myself on having, previous to the receipt of your note of yesterday, declined all interference as to your supposed claims on Mr. Morris; particularly as it is now too evident you meant to entrap me into a correspondence, for the purpose of afterwards intruding that correspondence on the public. I beg to decline the favour of any further correspondence. You will, of course, publish this with the rest, if any.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"RICH. WILLIAMS."

Pall-Mall East, 28th June, 1824.

Oh, it is great to have a banker's strength,
But it is tyrannous to use it like a banker.

It is often a very sad thing not to have friends to advise one, and often quite as sad a thing to have them. I was very strongly solicited and assured by my friends, that if I wrote "a proper letter" to Mr. Canning, stating my pecuniary situation, and mentioning certain supposed services (which I think real ones) of my father, with many *et ceteras* respecting myself,—that

"something" might be done for me. I expected no fortunate result from such an application, but am glad I made it, (which, to ensure good fortune, I did on my birth-day,) because it procured me the honour (only think!) of a letter from a prime minister of Great Britain, and all in his proper autograph,—to wit:

Foreign Office, March 23d, 1824.

"Mr. Canning has received Mr. Thomas Dibdin's letter of the 15th ult. Mr. Canning is sorry that it is entirely out of his power to hold out to Mr. Dibdin the prospect of any situation, as he is already under more engagements, and has very many more claims upon him, than he has any chance of being able to fulfil."

It now began to be an additional trouble to find that my law-suit with Drury-Lane was remaining provokingly stationary. Mr. H. Cooper was quite sanguine as to the success of it; and we had great reason to think the supineness of my own solicitors was doing me great disservice. I refrain from naming them, because, however they (each partner imagining the other was active for me,) delayed my expectations, they always behaved, in other respects, with great kindness and respectful attention. While I was

unfortunately cut off from active exertion through managerial means, and unable personally to attend my attorneys,—I wrote to them in language of strong complaint, which produced this answer from one of the partners :—

July 5th, 1824.

"My dear Sir,

"I have seen Mr. ****, and he says he did not get the amended draft declaration from Mr. Cooper until after the essoign day of this term; and that, consequently, the defendant was entitled to an *imparlance*, which Mr. Woodriffe, upon application, refused to waive. On this account, he says, he did not deliver the declaration, because no plea could have been obtained till next term, and because it wants further amendment."

To this I replied,—expressing my regret,—

"Mr. * * * * had not described the real state of the business. I have only to add, that I have desired no delay may take place now.

"I am, &c. &c."

Mrs. Dibdin enclosed a copy of the above to Mr. Cooper, who immediately replied :—

July 6th, 1824.

"Madam,

"I have received your letter of this evening; and, in answer to it, beg to inform you, that the statement which Mr. **** has given to Mr. ****, and Mr. **** to you, is totally void of foundation. So far from the statement that Mr. **** had not the declaration till after the essoign day of *this* term being true, I have ascertained, by entries made in my clerk's accounts, that your solicitors had the draft of the declaration from my chambers either very soon before, or very soon after, the beginning of the *last* term, and that they had it not much sooner was their own fault, for it lay on my table some days, in expectation of their sending for it; and when I found they gave themselves no trouble about it, I sent it them. If they had used proper dispatch, you might have been at issue in your cause; and they ought to account to you very satisfactorily for the delay, and therefore very differently from what they have yet done. If it were my case, instead of your husband's, I should move the court against them.

"I am, dear Madam, yours very truly,

"H. COOPER."

And so the case stood over.

As remuneration for the play of "Kenilworth" was one of the points in dispute between Mr. Elliston and myself, that gentleman having rejected my production,—that production having been lent to the Bath Theatre, on condition of my copy being confined to that house, where Mrs. Bunn performed Queen Elizabeth in it,—I was not a little surprised at seeing it announced at Drury-Lane Theatre, from whence I was privately informed that it was my own version, with the addition only of a new scene for Queen Elizabeth: I therefore thus addressed Mr. Bunn:—

"Sir,

"Permit me to ask you as a gentleman, and also professionally as stage manager, whether the play of 'Kenilworth,' about to be acted at Drury-Lane Theatre, is, or is not, the same which, at the repeated solicitations of Mr. Dimond, made by letter through Mr. Charlton, I permitted to be acted from my prompt copy at the Theatre-Royal Bath, and, subsequently, in consequence of a similar request from Mr. Harris, at the Theatre-Royal Dublin; as an important legal question will, under certain circumstances, be directly involved in the produc-

tion of the above-named play. Your immediate answer will oblige,

"Sir, your obedient servant,

"T. DIBDIN."

York-street, Jan. 3d, 1824.

A. Bunn, Esq.

Mr. Bunn promptly replied :—

Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane, Jan. 3d, 1824.

"Sir,

"In reply to your favour of this day, I have to inform you that some parts of 'Kenilworth,' to be performed next week at this theatre, are taken, with little deviation, from the Bath copy; but that the general feature has been re-written, and so altered, as to bear very little resemblance to the play you allude to.

"I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

"A. BUNN.

"You are, of course, aware that the play, as acted at Bath, is in print by a piracy in Edinburgh."

I then wrote :—

5, York-street, Covent-Garden, Jan. 4, 1824.

"Sir,

"I am much obliged by your ready

information that some parts of the play of 'Kenilworth,' to be performed at Drury-Lane Theatre, are, without permission, taken from my MS. *confided* to the proprietor of the Bath Theatre. I regret to hear of the printed piracy you mention, which cannot, however, supply a reason why I should not prevent my property from being improperly made free with at Drury-Lane Theatre, by every public, immediate, and legal means, the justice of my claims, and the duty I owe my family and myself, point out to,

"Sir, your most obedient servant,

"T. Dibdin."

A. Bunn, Esq. stage-manager.

Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane, Jan. 4, 1824.

"Sir,

"The only reply I can make to your second letter is to repeat, that some parts of 'Kenilworth' are from the Bath copy, but that such parts are from that portion of the play, &c. written at Bath, and not belonging to your MS. The other parts of the Drury-Lane play have been collected from the novel and plays in print on the subject, aided by some trifling original matter.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"A. Bunn, *stage-manager*."

I went to see the play with my wife, and se-

veral of my friends: there were also many in Drury-Lane Theatre who had played in it at the Surrey; and all agreeing with what the evidence of my own senses convinced me of,—namely, that it was *bona fide* my version, with some little additions,—I sent a circular to the public prints to this effect:—

To the Editor, &c.

Sir,

Whoever may be compiler of the play of 'Kenilworth,' it is, as to routine of construction, (which differs from the novel, and particularly with respect to the new *dénouement* so much approved by the public prints,) an exact copy of the piece produced by me at the Surrey Theatre: the last scene, with the exception of some awkward mutilations, is *verbatim*. Solicited by the proprietors of the Bath Theatre, I lent them my MS. on a condition I did not expect would be broken,—that it should not be altered or acted elsewhere; and, with similar restrictions, I had also the pleasure of accommodating Mr. Harris with it for the Dublin Theatre. It has now found its way to Drury-Lane Theatre, with (among other deteriorations) the omission of the Magical Blacksmith and his Boy Flibertigibet, — two characters which effectually relieved the weightier parts of the drama. Trifling as may be the merit of my having founded a very successful play on a most masterly prototype, I cannot silently permit the Drury-Lane production to be exclusively attributed to others, who have so unceremoniously appropriated the labours of,

Sir, most respectfully yours,

T. Dibdin.

5, York-street, Covent-Garden, Jan. 11, 1824.

Very shortly after, there appeared a letter in the Morning Herald, containing a vindication of my claims to "Kenilworth," and highly flattering praise of my general dramatic exertions. I had not the slightest idea who the zealous writer could be, who so handsomely volunteered in my cause; and have only learned, within a few months, that the said advocate was a baronet, and a magistrate of some celebrity. Another well-written letter appeared in my behalf, with the signature of *Peter List*. Who may have been its author, I never could, even in the most distant degree, conjecture.

CHAP. XIII.

1824—1825.

"For Brutus was an honourable man."—*Julius Cæsar.*

Death of my friend Henry Cooper—Erskine and "The Laplanders" again—Mr. C. Kemble and Covent-Garden—Mr. Cundee and the Pantheon—Mr. Hawes, Mr. Welsh, and the Argyle Rooms—State of music in Italy—Mr. Erskine, Mr. Honeyman, and the Surrey Theatre—Mr. Jones and Sadler's Wells—Brother Charles and I change situations—First Campaign of my Second Series at Sadler's Wells—"Here we Are"—"Great Gentleman in the Little Parlour"—"Beauty in a Box"—"Man and Marquis"—"Fairy Red and Fairy Blue"—"Jacko"—"Abyssinia"—"Faustus"—"The Lawyer, the Jew, and the Yorkshireman"—"Winki the Witch"—"Garrick and his Double"—Revivals—Second Campaign, or Winter Season—"All in One Night"—"Merlin's Mount"—Mr. Honeyman—Arbitration—Verdict against the Haymarket.

My law affairs seemed to creep "softly as foot can fall;" and, as if to retard them still more, I lost my kind and zealous friend Henry Cooper, who fell the victim of sudden cold, inducing immediate and rapid inflammation through-

out the system: he had taken more than professional interest in both my theatrical differences, of which he had seen enough to comprehend the grounds; but it was my misfortune to be deprived of him as I had been of too many other friends when they were most wanted,—from His Royal Highness of Kent, and the Duke of Leeds, down to poor Pat Johnson, my honest master carpenter at the Surrey. By Mr. Cooper I had been introduced, at his table, to the late Lord Erskine, Sir George and Sir James Cockburn of the Admiralty, and several gentlemen of distinguished forensic rank, by whom I have often since been reminded of the pleasant and rational hours we had passed at Cooper's cottage near Vauxhall. I may speak well of the dead without suspicion of flattery; and never shall I cease to feel regret for the early fate of Henry Cooper. To his acquaintance I was also obliged for my introduction to an American gentleman of the name of Classon, who performed as an amateur at the Surrey Theatre.

To make a transit from Lord Erskine to plain John Erskine, my Surrey composer, I must remind the reader, as Erskine, a third time reminded *me*,—of his claim on Mr. Morris for the music of "The Laplanders." He, Erskine, said he had made his demand three times annually

without effect, and had refrained from legal proceedings entirely out of regard to me; not wishing hitherto, in return for my recommendation of him to Mr. Morris, to embroil me with the latter: in fact, he said, that as I was not now connected with the Haymarket, he had commenced hostilities; and as he had commenced them, I am free to confess there was something more than the *façon de parler* of mere politeness in the wish I expressed for his success.

Notwithstanding my being *out* (as it is termed) both of Drury-Lane and Haymarket ministry, it still was necessary that my family should be (at stated periods) indulged in a very natural propensity to eat. Just after I had closed with Mr. Elliston, who wished to engage me for Drury-Lane, I was offered a situation at Covent-Garden by Mr. Charles Kemble, which I wish I could honourably have accepted instead of the one I unfortunately did. Covent-Garden now was not *come-at-able;* it therefore behoved me to look for other ways and means. Mr. Cundee, a builder, who had some years back opened the Pantheon as a theatre for melo-dramatic opera, &c. introduced himself to me as being in possession of the same establishment, for which he was certain of a license; and agreed to give me

a very handsome appointment as his acting manager, author, &c. &c. Nothing was wanting but the license; and in order to assist his interest, I waited on my old friend Mr. Const, with the recommendation of Mr. Evance and the Surrey magistrates. Mr. Const was kind enough to assure me, that as far as I was concerned, I needed no intercessor with him; that his wishes were quite in accordance with the request of Mr. Cundee for a license to open the Pantheon, as he thought the neighbourhood of Oxford-street as much entitled to theatrical amusement as any other; but that he feared there were obstacles,—first, arising from the state of the building itself; and next, from the fact that Mr. Cundee was not in actual possession of it. Accordingly when counsel afterwards moved the court for a license, it was withheld on the grounds Mr. Const had anticipated. Disappointed in my expectations, from the failure of a scheme which I had not originated, it struck me that an English burletta company, upon a superior plan, at the Argyle Rooms, supported by the first singers and composers, and performing twice a week, as at the Italian Opera, might be a very productive speculation. On this hint I wrote to Mr. Hawes, joint proprietor of the Argyle Rooms with Mr.

T. Welsh. Mr. Hawes appeared to approve of the proposal, and advised me, without loss of time, to write to his partner, Mr. Welsh, then at Florence, which (having known Mr. Welsh many years) I did; and as his answer involves a very characteristic view of the present state of dramatic music in Italy, and its merits compared with those of the English school,—I insert it as a document of some professional interest:—

Florence, Jan. 21st, 1825.

"My dear Sir,

"I received your letter yesterday, and am quite anxious to reply by the first post, knowing the great delays to which all communications from hence are subject. If the species of entertainment you propose could have patronage, (and I see no reason why it should not,) there could be but little doubt of success, when conducted by one so capable as yourself. Our rooms have called so largely on the purses of myself and my friend Hawes, that we may naturally be expected to do all in our power to make an adequate income. My most worthy friend Mr. Dyer, magistrate at Marlborough-street Office, did describe to me the extent of the license which has through him been obtained since I left London; and should there be any doubt, he will inform Hawes; but in case

there should be none, Hawes my partner will receive from me full power to act according to his discretion. What do you think of first forming a list of subscribers? and that musical men (teachers) should subscribe a certain sum, to have an opportunity of bringing their pupils, after trial before a committee, into the concern? It might bring much interest in, and prevent opposition to the plan. It may not be unacceptable to you to have a few truths respecting the Italian stages of Milan and Florence, of which, all those who spoke before I left London were in such ecstasy. It is to me quite astonishing that men of common sense can so far lose their respectability in the estimation of thinking men, as to praise such trash as that which here disgraces the name of the drama. The interest excited as to the cut of a pair of small-clothes is sufficient subject for an opera at the Pergola; and I declare, most seriously, that in all Italy I have not heard a singer within a thousand degrees of Mrs. Salmon; and as to the men, I have not heard one whose name should be mentioned in the same year with Braham. The rage here is a neutral, a Signor * * * * * *,† and any thing so bad, to be admired, I never heard: a perfect

† This gentleman has since appeared at the King's Theatre.

fringe merchant, every word disguised by squalling, which he considers ornament; but the taste for good singing is gone from once famed Italy, and nothing but outrage on propriety has a chance of success: drums, trumpets, and cymbals accompany every song; and the singer who grins most, is considered the best. Even the construction of the theatres is bad: the pit is so flat, that on the third seat you cannot see; and in the boxes intended for six, two only can see the stage. Think of this for Florence, which travellers so extol! Liars! The stage at Milan (the Grand Scala) is double that of Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden, and the spectacles very fine, and orchestra excellent; but the acting and singing pieces are in want of propriety, the same as here. I really think the climate and light wines make the English who visit Italy mad, and render them forgetful of the polish they left in Old England. We are now quite surrounded with snow, and the mountains are beyond description beautiful; all their tops covered, but the valleys green, and weather mild. Your letter just came in time to find me; for to-morrow I shall go to Milan, and remain there three weeks. When you see Hawes, tell him that I have not received any letter from him. Should he be out of town, Mr. White, at the Argyle

Rooms, is the person who can give you information as to them. If you have not become quite tired of writing for the winter theatres, I should like an opera from your pen for Miss Wilson's return. Think of Rosetta—acting as well as singing: but I ought not to venture a hint to one, whose subject displayed Braham, the brightest ornament of the English vocal band. It is too late to send compliments of the season; but I hope that this and each succeeding one may be propitious to your wishes; and am,

"My dear sir, your obedient,

"Tho. Welsh.

"You will be pleased to hear that I have now on my table offers to engage Miss Wilson at Milan, Naples, and Florence: I am in doubt as to which I shall accept first."

During this interval, I was not idle; but was rapidly establishing a school for the English drama, having occasionally the use of the Adelphi Theatre for my pupils, and also Mr. Goadby's Rooms in the Regent's Quadrant. A treaty with Mr. Hawes for a school in the Argyle Rooms was what gave rise to the idea on which I had written to Florence. I thought it best to await the return of Mr. Welsh from the Continent before I thought more of the Argyle

rooms. About this time my Lapland composer, in his rough friendly way, "dropped me," as he termed it, the subjoined note:—

"Dear Sir,

"I beg leave, if you will not think it intrusive, to state a conversation which took place last evening between the present lessee of the Surrey Theatre and myself: I told him I thought there was a person within his reach, who, if engaged, would add greatly to the respectability of the theatre, and took the liberty of mentioning your name: his reply was, he esteemed you highly, and would gladly receive you as his best friend, and that he would be liberal in the way of an engagement towards you. I should like to see you once more walking about on the Surrey boards. I think our lessee an honourable man; and I know he would adore you, were you to enter into an engagement with him.

"Yours truly, Sir,

"I. T. Erskine."

This led to a negociation with Mr. Honeyman, the lessee of the Surrey; and while we were at issue on some points which required Mr. Honeyman's sanction, the late Mr. Jones,

solicitor, of Brunswick-square, who had married the daughter of my respected (but deceased) partner in Sadler's Wells, Mr. Reeve, the celebrated composer,—desired me to call on him respecting an engagement to manage Sadler's Wells Theatre, of which, in his wife's right, he had become a proprietor. As the time had for some time gone by when Mr. Honeyman was to have given an answer to my *ultimatum* respecting the Surrey, I entered into negociation with Mr. Jones, having perfectly understood from him that there was no treaty on foot with my brother, or any likelihood of one. Finding, after a short period, that it was tolerably certain I should engage at the Wells, I saw Mr. Honeyman, who very much regretted his having (through severe illness) been prevented writing to me: he would have given me my own terms to close with him; but I had the pleasure of convincing him that I could not honourably accept them, and of opening a treaty between him and my brother Charles, which concluded by my brother's assuming the management of the Surrey on the same day on which I was entrusted with the superintendence of Sadler's Wells.

Mr. Erskine's action against Mr. Morris for "work and labour done," in composing the

music of my piece of "The Laplanders," came on at Guildhall in the Court of Common Pleas; and after many broad grins about the death of the deer, horn solos, hartshorn, and running accompaniments,—the jury gave Mr. Erskine eighty pounds damages: costs followed of course.

The proprietors of Sadler's Wells were Mr. Hughes, a principal proprietor of Vauxhall; Mr. Jones, whom I have mentioned; Mr. Dixon, of the Repository, Barbican; and Mr. Grimaldi, sen., who had married a sister of Mr. Hughes; and who, when I was manager of Sadler's Wells in the year 1794, was a little boy, at least in appearance. The first part in which Mr. Grimaldi had to speak and sing, (he having, even at that period, a fine deep-toned bass voice,) was in my pantomime of "Sadak and Kalasrade," in which he was advertised as Master Grimaldi. The gentlemen who are now proprietors, having, during the winter vacation, materially improved the theatre, at the expense of upwards of three thousand pounds, it was committed to my guidance, to be opened on Easter Monday, April 4th, 1825.

We commenced with the rejected piece of "The Great Gentleman in the little Parlour," which, though not supported by the talent which would have aided it at the Haymarket, was

nevertheless well acted, and as well received: it was preceded by an introductory piece called "Here We Are," which I had written to display the talents of the whole *corps dramatique*, whose exertions gained the prelude considerable popularity. The proprietors were extremely liberal in the splendid appointments of dresses, scenery, and characteristic embellishment, allowed me for the melo-dramatic Eastern spectacle of "Beauty in a Box," which I had prepared as the concluding piece. On the 18th, I brought out what I consider as one of my best attempts at farce, under the title of "The Man and the Marquis;" and on the 23d of May (my thirty-second wedding-day) I produced the pantomime of "Fairy Blue and Fairy Red.' On the 10th of June, I brought out the French melo-drame of "Jocko, the Brazilian Ape;" and on July 14th, my opera of "Abyssinia" melo-dramatized, and which, from its oft-repeated reception, convinced me that my conjectures were not far wrong as to the effect which it would have produced had it been received at the Haymarket.

The rage for the marvellous magic of the German opera led me to think "Faustus" would be a very fair subject for burlesque; and on the 25th of July, I had the pleasure of seeing "The

Devil's in Doctor Faustus" distinguished by undivided approbation. I next converted my comedy of "The School for Prejudice" into a three-act opera, with from fifteen to twenty new songs, &c. by the name of "The Lawyer, the Jew, and the Yorkshireman;" and during the successful run of this piece, wrote a comic romance in three acts, which appeared on the 5th of September, as "The Three Enchanted Girdles, or Winki the Witch and the Ladies of Samarcand," which is yet received as a favourite; for the leading feature of this piece I was indebted to a little French fairy tale lent me by Mrs. Williams, the sister of Mr. Greenwood, our principal artist.

Some years prior to this, Mr. Bannister had requested me to write a farce for his benefit at Drury-Lane, from a French *vaudeville* performing at Paris, as "Garrick and his Double," and founded on an incident supposed to have taken place at Litchfield, the native town of my great god-father, who, on going to perform there after his brilliant success in London, finds himself impudently anticipated by an impostor, whose usurpation of Garrick's name and character very nearly procures the genuine Roscius the honours of a horse-pond, and an ignominious expulsion from the land of his infancy. As it was not the

most judicious plan of the French author to lay the scene in a place where Garrick's identity could be so easily proved, I took the liberty to transfer the field of action to a distant part of the kingdom, as well as to endeavour the addition of some little characteristic *traits* I had gathered respecting the hero of the British stage, whose character and manners the Parisian author imagines he has invested with complete English *vraisemblance*, by making him, on his *entrée* to the inn, call for "Rost biff! biffstek! ponch!" When the farce was finished, Mr. Bannister, though he much approved it, began to apprehend it would be deemed too great an instance of presumption in any actor to represent the former autocrat of Drury and the drama: the part of the impostor he meant to play himself; but no one being found sufficiently hardy to aspire to present the portrait of little Davy, the farce lay fifteen or sixteen years in my bureau, till it saw the light at Sadler's Wells for my benefit, on the 10th of October, when both Garrick and the impostor were so well acted by Messrs. Campbell and Williams, that it became a very favourite stock-piece. On the same evening, I was myself obliged to re-assume the buskin, after a lapse of five-and-twenty years, and play a

part which Mr. Huntley was prevented, by sudden indisposition, from acting. Another farce, refused by Mr. Morris, called "East and West," was presented on the same evening, with considerable applause. A successful little farce, called "Curiosity Cured, or Powder for Peeping," (written by a gentleman named Buckstone, belonging to the Cobourg Theatre,) was performed, with some alterations in the *dénouement*, for the purpose of exhibiting Mrs. Fitzwilliam's versatility of talent; and admirably effected the end for which it was constructed.

Besides the above novelties, I revived, from the catalogue of my Surrey, English Opera, Haymarket, and Covent-Garden pieces, (altering and adapting each to the particular talent of the Sadler's Wells company,) the following dramas, &c. "Alfred and Matilda, or Who's the Murderer?" "Harlequin Hoax;" "Trick for Trick;" "Three Times Three;" "Spoil'd Children;" "Red Riding-hood;" "The President and Peasant's Daughter;" and took leave of the audience, on the last day of October, with an intimation that Sadler's Wells would re-open at Christmas for an experimental winter season;—an experiment, which the amazing increase of population in the immediate neighbourhood of

the theatre well warranted, and with the result of which the proprietors afterwards declared themselves amply satisfied.

The merry editor of "John Bull" speaks of the New Town, as it may well be termed, of which Sadler's Wells forms the central point, as so remote from "known" London society, that we who are its inhabitants speak a sort of *patois* of our own, which the watchmen translate to those strangers who lose their way in our direction, when overtaken by night-fall. I certainly can myself recollect an amazing difference between the present time and that period (before the colony I speak of was formed, and Londoners sent out to people it) when I was first stage manager of the Wells. The house, in which I write this, is situated in a spacious square, the centre of which is ornamented by a superb specimen of architecture in the form of a handsome new church. The site of church and square was, not five years since, an immense field, where people used to be stopped and robbed on their return in the evening from Sadler's Wells, (but those good old times are all gone by, as well as the passengers;) and the ground-floor of the parlour where I sit, was, as nearly as possible, the very spot where my wife and I fell over a recumbent cow on our

way home, one murky night, in a thunder-storm; and only regained the solitary path we had strayed from in the dark, by the timely aid of a tremendous flash of lightning.

Well, situated as we now are in the middle of the metropolis, on a spot which was once the extreme border of the town, my masters commissioned me to recommence active theatrical operations on the 26th of December, 1825, which I did, by opening Sadler's Wells with a new *petite* opera in three acts, founded on my comedy of "Five Miles Off," and called "All in One Night;" the altered revival of a Surrey burletta, under the title of "The Three Crumpies;" and a new comic Welsh pantomime, which I christened "Merlin's Mount, or Harlequin Crww." These, with the revivals of "The Spread Eagle," "Black Spirits and White," "The Duke and the Devil," "Humphrey Clinker," "Intrigue," and "Don Giovanni," carried us through a successful season of ten weeks, when I was again commissioned to take leave of the public till the ensuing Easter.

In the intermediate vacation, a report having obtained that Messrs. Terry and Yates were very anxious to take Sadler's Wells on lease, and had made splendid overtures to that effect,—I had the pleasure again to receive a volunteer

offer from the lessee of the Surrey Theatre,—the more gratifying, from the manner in which it speaks of my brother Charles, who, during his engagement, had certainly not let "the grass grow under his feet:"—

Surrey Theatre, 27th Feb. 1826.

"Dear Sir,

"Understanding Messrs. Terry and Yates are in treaty for Sadler's Wells, and that, should such treaty take effect they will bring their own establishment; and wishing to attach as much talent to my own theatre as I can,—I should be happy to make you an offer, (which was a very liberal one,) as coadjutor with my present acting manager, your brother, with whom I shall never part, while he will, as he has done, exert himself for me; leaving it to yourself, whether you would prefer being styled stage manager,—or, doing that duty, call it by any other name. My only motive in mentioning this punctilio arises from my anxiety not to offend talent, and apprehensive you may think the denomination of stage manager subservient to that of acting manager; but you and your brother Charles Dibdin would understand each other, I am certain. Feeling this offer is one pound per week less than mentioned in our former treaty, I would willingly make it up by

every comfort I could afford, every attention I could show you, or courtesy as to privilege of admissions; and by throwing you off an equivalent in the scale of your benefit charges. Should I be wrong in making this offer, your usual urbanity of manners, and gentlemanly feelings, will excuse the roughness of a man, who, in early life, instead of being at school, was floating over the blue waters.

"Sincerely yours,

"F. R. HONEYMAN."

Mr. H.'s information respecting Messrs. Terry and Yates being erroneous, (though not entirely without foundation,) I had only to thank Frank Honeyman most sincerely (which I again do) for his very kind intentions, and declined his generous offers.

My arbitration with Mr. Elliston was now proceeding with occasional delays, and at length terminated; though, from the expense required to complete all that the law requires, I have not yet been able to ascertain the exact event. I have it, however, from pretty good authority, that I am allowed £100 for "Kenilworth;" £100 for the Olympic "Old Nick," conjured up in the service of Mr. Elliston for the use of M. Alexandre; and that a sufficient

sum is added for Mr. Elliston's discontinuance of my engagement, to carry costs.

On the 23d of June my action in the King's Bench against Mr. Morris was tried. I sued for £100 for writing the piece of "The Laplanders," for the music of which, in the Common Pleas, Mr. Erskine had eighty pounds awarded him by a jury: but the receipt drawn up for me to sign for arrears on "The Vicar of Wakefield" was so worded, that, without my supposing it alluded to any matters but those of the preceding season, it, in the eye of the law, included remuneration for all I had *antecedently* written for Mr. Morris. Mr. Brougham commented very severely and very properly on this circumstance; and I seriously advise all whom it may concern, in future, never to sign a receipt drawn up by one lawyer until it has been read by another. My case, with respect to "The Laplanders," was exactly the same as Mr. Erskine's. The Court of Common Pleas would never have awarded damages to the amount they did, in favour of that gentleman, if they had not been quite certain he was entitled to them; and the Court of King's Bench would have assigned me an equal compensation, or more, if the transaction of "The Laplanders," by an implication I was not "awake to," had not been mixed up with engagements at the

Haymarket totally foreign to it. For my frequent attendance on Mr. Morris prior to the opening of the Haymarket, and subsequently, till that gentleman refused to pay me weekly my *legal due*, (to put it in the most retail point of view,) there was still a claim to settle. Mr. Morris paid twenty pounds into court; increased it to thirty: the jury gave fifty, which entailed on Mr. Morris the costs also of a very expensive suit, which if he had, in the first instance, acted with the slightest degree of common good-nature or gentlemanly consideration, he would have avoided; and, at the same time, have saved me from a prison, my readers from this very disagreeable recapitulation, and himself at least £100 more than I condescended, in my distress, to petition him for, though I had a right to demand it.

My life, ladies and gentlemen! (that is, my autobiographic life) is now drawing towards its close; and at its close I can assure you I shall feel nothing but good-will to those I leave behind. I shall merely conclude this chapter by observing, that if the old mythology had been founded in truth, and I were hereafter to meet old Tommy Harris in the Elysian Fields, and relate to him some of the circumstances I have done to you, —he would run to express to Foote and Colman

the Elder his regret, that among other changes in London, the classical ground of the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket had, by some pantomimic metamorphosis of fortune, been changed into the site of a chandler's shop.

I should have related, in speaking of the period when I was, or aspired to be, an actor in the Chester Theatre, that I once was rather roughly talked to by a worthy but very ill-tempered alderman, for having given sixpence to a punished pauper; and that I wrote a boyish, but (as I then conceived) a bitter philippic against the Cheshire Dogberry: among others, it contained the following lines, which I was going to place as a motto at the head of this chapter; but forbore, lest it should be thought for a moment, that I could, by any means, wish to apply them to any gentleman placed in authority upon such polished ground as the former territory of the authors of "The Minor," "The Jealous Wife," and "Inkle and Yarico:"—

I never said, "Wit flies but here and there,
And that his worship never yet had caught it;"
I never said, "His manners shamed a bear;"
And yet, I'll take my oath, I always thought it.

It is generally acknowledged as a truism, that where absolute monarchy constitutes a form of

government, it is never *so* absolute as in petty states: it is the same in theatres; it is seldom that in the two "great grand" establishments, the monarchs condescend to be little in very little things; and their general conduct is marked with, at least, the appearance of urbanity. In some little theatres there is also an affectation of the *etiquette* of courts,—whether Duke's-court, or Tooke's-court, I cannot say; but the manners that we understand by those of the *vieille cour*, are totally out of the question.

Englishmen (meaning Irishmen, and Welshmen, and Scotchmen,) certainly feel restraint more severely than natives of most other countries. The want of freedom of action for the good of the trust committed to me, under the sub-committee, and nominally under Mr. Elliston (but truly under Mr. Winston) at Drury-Lane, was unpleasant enough; but the fetters put on me at the Haymarket, leaving me a field for my capabilities as narrow as the wretched staircase which led to my state cabin,—depressed me more than all foregone constraints. Was it wonderful then, that, at this period, more than at any other of my life, I might be truly said to sigh for independence? And this is not *much* to wish for either, at least in the estimation of a very superior man; for Mr. John Kemble

once seriously told me that true independence consisted in—" being able to shave with cold water!"

While speaking of Mr. Kemble, I must take leave to apologise here for an involuntary error respecting his sister, which I have but just detected in my first volume,—in stating that Mrs. Dibdin was applied to, to perform the part of Millwood, on occasion of the indisposition of Mrs. Siddons: the insertion of that lady's name was unintentionally substituted for that of Mrs. Litchfield.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP. XIV.

1825—1826.

Mr. Kemble's definition of true independence — Easter campaign at Sadler's Wells—"Mrs. Double U"—"Emmiline of Hungary"—"Hot and Cold, or Harlequin Snow-Ball"—"Peacock's Feather"—"Love in Full Gallop"—Pony Races—Revivals—"All a Fetch"—Death of Mr. Jones and Lord Chichester—Actors' interpolations—Summary of all my dramatic attempts at all the theatres—Dedicatory inscriptions—Unfinished works—Mr. Kemble again—Garden and gallery of theatrical portraits at Belmont—Termini, not Caryatides—Amateur author's opera—Dr. Hoadley Ashe—Sir Richard Hoare—Epitaph in Stourton church-yard.

I'LL tell you the how, when, and where the classic manager, at that time, of Covent-Garden, happened to give, with much intentional good-humoured drollery, the apparently odd definition of true independence, which closes our thirteenth chapter. I had the honour of being in a post-chaise with Mr. Kemble, very early in the morning, on our way to a friend's house in the country, on business to be related hereafter. We had left town early; and I expressed a wish for our arrival where I might enjoy the luxury of warm water for the purpose

of shaving. "There, my dear Dibdin!" observed my fellow-traveller, "you are quite wrong: you go often, I dare say, (as I do) on visits to gentlemen's houses, where a guest, who is not attended by a valet of his own, will always find it advisable to make himself as independent of his host's servants as possible: now, if you are subservient to the luxury of warm water, you must either ring your bell as soon as you awake in the morning; or, if you do not readily find one, you must call William, or John, or Thomas, (for gentlemen's servants have various names,) and ask for warm water; by which means it is proclaimed to all the house, that Mr. Thomas Dibdin is going to get rid of his beard; (it is a mistake to suppose he said *bird*.) On the other hand, if, even in the depth of winter, you are man enough to use cold water, you enter the breakfast-parlour in the true spirit of independence, above the necessity of previous assistance; and the neatness of your toilet receives double effect from the silent and unassuming way in which you have made it." Mr. Kemble laughed as heartily as he made me laugh at this and several other whimsical ideas, each embodying much polished good sense in their comicality.

To return to Sadler's Wells. Mr. Williams, our principal comic performer, rented the theatre on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent; and

as our regular season had not closed till the 6th of March, I had only from the 7th to the 27th to write and prepare three new pieces for representation, deducting three or four hours each day during a fortnight's busy rehearsal. Early rising, and writing late at night, however, conquered all obstacles: and on Easter Monday, I produced a comic sketch called "Mrs. Double U;" a two-act melo-drame named "Emmiline of Hungary;" and the pantomime of "Hot and Cold, or Harlequin Snow-ball:"—all which pieces received considerable applause. The very short time I had for preparation arose from the circumstance of the proprietors not having determined, till the close of the winter season, whether they would or would not let their theatre; and, under this uncertainty, neither could I fix my mind to any given point as to what I should write, nor had we any artists at work to second my endeavours. I have heard a highly respected author and theatrical proprietor give it as his opinion that he prefers being "pressed into a corner, for that in a theatre things done in a hurry are almost always the most successful." I have known many single instances of the truth of this; perhaps some dozen fell within my own experience: but to produce three pieces at once was almost too much for my best exertions to accomplish, especially as both of my sons were

very dangerously ill, and for some days I was myself obliged to write comic songs in a sick bed. These were little *contre-temps* not contemplated when I set sail for Margate, but very naturally consequent (*à la* Robinson Crusoe) on forsaking the paths prescribed me.

When our pieces had been acted about three weeks, the proprietors thought the death of the elephant at Exeter Change a fit subject to attract full galleries; and a piece was written and produced by Mr. Campbell, of the Wells Theatre, which was successfully acted many nights, bearing the deceased animal's name, "Chuneelah." For Whitsuntide I wrote a melo-dramatic romance in three acts, founded on one of the tales in the New Arabian Nights Entertainments: I called it "The Peacock's Feather:" it continues still to be acted with *éclat*. I next altered Mr. Waldron's comedy of "Heigho for a Husband!" into the burletta of "Love in Full Gallop."

It was said many years ago, during the veterán King's management of Sadler's Wells Theatre, that if the dogs * had not come to Sadler's Wells, Sadlers Wells must have gone to the dogs: and, during the present season, the intense and prolonged heat of the weather, which was injuring every theatre in the metropolis, in-

* Dancing dogs.

spired my "governors" with the idea, that in order to make our pieces run, it would be a good speculation to procure a few handsome ponies who should run with them: our audience therefore were pleasantly seated in the shade, outside of the theatre, till the sun had lost his power; and then had no objection to enter a theatre artificially cooled for their reception. The races were extremely well conducted, and their attraction was considerably beyond our most sanguine expectations. Besides other change of entertainments, we performed a version of "Clari;" a farce called "The Female Jockey," taken by Mr. Dimond from the French; next, "The Blind Boy;" and finally, by desire of the proprietors, the never-failing "Tom and Jerry" of Moncrieff.

As I had before found the burlesque piece of "The Devil and Doctor Faustus" very popular, I imagined a comic parody on the awful subject of the "Death-Fetch," might equally answer the purposes of the theatre; and the reception of "All a Fetch, or Ghosts and Apprehensions,"—proved that I had not been wrong in my supposition. This and two sketches, called "The Islington Stage," and "Spain and Portugal," are the last dramatic attempts I have had the honour of placing before the public: the first, in the year 1791, was "Sun-shine after

Rain," which, as my *premier* essay, I dedicated to my father; and if I should live to see as much kindness extended to those pieces which I am now preparing for future exhibition, as has been awarded to the long list between the two extreme dates, I shall have so much additional cause of gratitude towards a public to whom no author living owes more.

The pieces I altered and revived this season, in addition to those I have named above, were "All Her Own Way," re-written from my burletta of "Rather too Bad;" "Humphrey Clinker;" "Sir Launcelot Greaves;" "Alonzo and Imogine; "The Horse and the Widow," altered into "Four Legs and Two Legs;" "The Two Gregories;" "The Birth-day," altered to "The Veterans;" "The Red Man and the Savage;" and "Mother Goose." A melo-drame by Mr. Planché, called "The Caliph and the Cadi," was also revived with a new scene and duett, which I wrote at the request of Mr. Grimaldi, to introduce him and his son on the stage together: their joint acting produced considerable effect. My remaining leisure hours since June have been employed in the present enumeration of my professional ups and downs,—scenes of vicissitude not yet come to a close, and of which another chapter or two yet remain.

I have had to mention too many instances of my prematurely losing numbers of my best friends, but have omitted to detail the mournful story and fatal misfortune of Mr. Jones, the gentleman who, through the kindest anxiety for my interests, had voluntarily recommended me as manager to his partners in Sadler's Wells. In a pressure of carriages near Hyde-park Corner, Mr. Jones was thrown from his gig, and fell with such force against the curb-stone of the footway, that a concussion of the brain ensued: he was carried home senseless to his afflicted wife, who herself was suffering from severe indisposition; and after lingering two or three days without speaking, he left two fine boys, with their amiable mother, to lament his loss.

My respected patron, the late Earl of Chichester, whom for years I had the honour to meet at the select club of the Literary Fund Society, was kind enough to offer my eldest son a place in the Post-Office, under the idea (from the boy's being nearly six feet high) that he was at least sixteen years old. When I assured Mr. Freeling that this was not yet the fact, his Lordship was written to, and his interest promised to place the lad in a similar situation on his arrival at the proper age, which will take place within a week of the day on which I am

writing this: but the Earl of Chichester has just been added to the list of my departed friends, and the kind hope he encouraged is buried in his grave.*

I remember on one day of our meeting at the Literary Fund Club, a gentleman was in the chair, who, though in general a very pleasant promoter of conviviality, appeared (from what cause we yet remain ignorant) quite unmindful of the jolly business of the day; and, although I never knew a society more moderate in promoting the transit of the bottle, the supineness of the president created a little astonishment. At length, Lord Chichester, in the quietest and most pleasant way, intimated to the chair that we stood in need of the usual circulation of the bottle, which was instantly passed by the *præses* with the quiet observation of "I take no more, my Lord!"—"Then," said Lord Chichester, "we will have the honour of drinking your health in your *abstinence*.

* I had written this desponding sentence some weeks back; but have the grateful pleasure of now adding, that my generous friend, Mr. Freeling, so powerfully espoused my son's cause with Lord Frederick Montague, that, through his kind patronage, Lord Chichester's benevolent intentions have been most liberally carried into effect.

Having reserved a few summings-up, anecdotes, and articles, to supply former omissions, with which to occupy my concluding chapter, I shall finish the present one with a brief summary of the varied labours of a pen which has been the only patrimony I ever possessed. Had it been backed with a few hundred pounds in the outset, I feel a belief that I should have done no worse than others who have had that fair play from fortune which she has not accorded me. Possessing no worldly goods at the beginning, I, who have assisted many, never had one friend to "set me going," as country folks call it; but have always laboured very hard, as the subjoined list (not given from vanity, but in vindication of my assertion) will tolerably well prove.

In the succeeding catalogue of what I have actually brought before the town, on the stages of nearly all its theatres, though there may be found pieces containing an infinity of nonsense, I venture to assert that there is not a line in one of them intended to give a moment's pain to any individual, nor one, that I am aware of, that has even the slightest tendency to immorality. Whole sentences are sometimes given on the stage, (particularly in minor theatres,) which were never put into an actor's mouth by the authors of the pieces represented: when I had a

theatre of my own, by firmly resisting, I succeeded in preventing this improper practice; but it can never be effectually done where the acting or stage manager has not *power* to enforce,—not by fine, which is a mean and slavish penalty that I never would enforce;—but by discharging any performers who, after frequent admonitions, setting at naught the interests, experience, and feelings of an author, should persist in firing their "three morning guns," when one only is necessary. It is not to the profession at large, but to such gentlemen as I allude to, Sheridan's too true observation applies:—"Give these players a good thing, and they never know when to have done with it." I cannot boast of giving them many good things; but I remember, in the piece of "The Chinese Sorcerer," at Drury-Lane, they introduced so many bad ones, involving all sorts of anachronisms, and making Chinese natives speak in the cockney vein of the personages in "Life in London," that although I am persuaded the audience could never imagine such very coarse inconsistencies could proceed from any author who had once been patronized on a London stage,—yet I am equally convinced that the success of the piece would have been infinitely greater, and more in favour

of both lessee and author, had this vile practice I speak of been "reformed altogether."

Summary of Plays, Operas, Farces, Pantomimes, &c. &c. produced at the

THEATRE-ROYAL COVENT-GARDEN.

Comedies.

1 Five Thousand a Year.
2 Birth-Day.
3 Will for the Deed.
4 School for Prejudice.

Operas in three acts.

5 Cabinet.
6 Family Quarrels.
7 English Fleet.
8 Il Bondocani.
9 Thirty Thousand.
10 White Plume.
11 Two Faces under a Hood.
12 Up to Town.
13 Zuma.

Farces and musical After-pieces.

14 Jew and Doctor.
15 True Friends.
16 St. David's Day.

17 Sun-shine after Rain. (Mr. Munden's benefit.)
18 Mouth of the Nile.
19 Horse and Widow.
20 Miseries of Human Life. (Mr. Fawcett's benefit.)
21 Tag in Tribulation. (Mr. Knight's benefit.)
22 The Hermione. (Mr. Lewis's benefit.)
23 Bonifacio and Bridgetina.
24 Princess and No Princess, or Forest of Hermanstadt.
25 Naval Pillar.
26 Nelson's Glory.
27 Jubilee of George III.
28 Schniederkins.

Melo-drames.

29 Valentine and Orson.
30 Secret Mine, (in conjunction with Mr. Fawcett.)

Comic Pantomimes.

31 The Volcano, or Rival Harlequins.
32 Harlequin's Tour.
33 Harlequin's Almanack.
34 Harlequin's Sweepstakes.
35 Harlequin Habeas.
36 Harlequin Quicksilver.
37 Harlequin Magnet.
38 Harlequin and Mother Goose.
39 Harlequin in his Element.
40 Harlequin Pedlar.

Two addresses to open the theatre.

Prologues or Epilogues to my own plays and farces, and to "John Bull," "Three per Cents," "Love gives the

Alarm," "Who wants a Guinea?" "Blind Bargain," "Word of Honour," Benefit addresses, &c.

Songs in "The Magic Oak," "Brazen Mask," "Albert and Adelaide," "The Escapes," "Definitive Treaty," "Aggression," and very many single songs for benefits, &c.

THEATRE-ROYAL DRURY-LANE.

Farces.

41 Of Age To-morrow.
42 Past Ten o'Clock.
43 What Next?
44 Who 's to have Her?
45 Twenty per Cent.
46 Orange Boven.
47 Ninth Statue, (assisted by Mr. Arnold.)
48 Pitcairn's Island.
49 Chinese Sorcerer, (melo-drama.)

Comic Pantomimes.

50 Harlequin Humpo.
51 Harlequin Harper.
52 Poet's Last Shilling.
53 Gog and Magog.

Prologues to "Ourselves," "School for Friends," "Personation."

Addresses and single songs for benefits very numerous.

THEATRE-ROYAL HAYMARKET.

Comedies.

54 Guilty or Not Guilty.
55 Five Miles Off, or the Finger-post.

56 Errors Excepted.

57 Rise and Fall.

Operas.

58 Morning, Noon, and Night.

59 Vicar of Wakefield.

Preludes and Farces.

60 Bill of Fare.

61 Love Letters.

62 Summer Flies, (altered from "The Will for the Deed.")

63 Come if you Can.

THEATRE-ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA-HOUSE.

64 Harlequin Hoax, a Farce.

FROGMORE LODGE.

65 A Farce in one act, without title, performed before Their Majesties.

SURREY THEATRE.

Three-act Plays and Operas, misnamed Burlettas, according to Act of Parliament.

66 Heart of Mid-Lothian.

67 Florence Macarthy.

68 Old Mortality.

69 Ivanhoe.

70 Kenilworth.

71 The Pirate.

72 Tom Jones.

73 Roderick Random.

74 Peggy Larkins.

75 How to Write an Opera.
76 Siege of Troy.
77 Tom and Jerry.
78 Three Talismans.
79 Give a Man Luck.
80 The Danaides.

Melo-dramas and Musical Pieces in two acts.

81 The Lady of the Lake.
82 Blood will have Blood.
83 America.
84 Llewellyn.
85 The Sicilian.
86 Bertram and Matilda.
87 Love, Hatred, and Revenge.
88 Chapel in the Wood.
89 President and Peasant's Daughter.
90 Silver Swan.
91 The Red Man and the Savage.
92 Fatal Island.
93 Constantine and Valeria.
94 Queen of Golconda.
95 Belisarius.
96 Fate of Calas.
97 Khouli Khan.
98 Knights of the Lion.
99 Ferdinand Count Fathom.
100 Reprobate.
101 Ruffian Boy.
102 Zapolya.
103 Kedeth, or the Hag of Poland.
104 Azim.
105 Scanderbeg.

106 The Harper's Son and the Duke's Daughter.
107 Montrose.
108 The Bride of Lammermoor.
109 Sir Arthur, or the Irish Chieftain.
110 Hermit of Mount Pausilippo.

Farces, miscalled Burlettas.

111 Humphrey Clinker.
112 Frederick and Voltaire.
113 Sir Launcelot Greaves.
114 Red Riding-hood.
115 Scraps, or Black Spirits and White.
116 Spoil'd Children.
117 Two Gregories.
118 Mouse-Traps.
119 Rather too Bad.
120 Small Profits.
121 The Widow.
122 Stop Thief.
123 The Family Punch-Bowl.
124 Don Giovanni.
125 The Three Blue Barons.
126 Three Times Three.
127 Slaves in Barbary.
128 Three Paddies.
129 Waterloo Bridge.
130 Wheels within Wheels.
131 Every Body's Cousin.
132 Masonry.
133 Leonora, or the Spectre on the White Horse.
134 Three Crows, or the Man and the Monkey.

In one act.

135 What's a Stage without Horses?
136 Trick for Trick.
137 At All in the Ring.

Comic Pantomimes.

138 Harlequin Basket-Maker.
139 Harlequin Colossus, or the Seven Wonders.
140 Dog and Duck, or Harlequin in the Obelisk.
141 Harlequin and Mirth.
142 Pedlar's Acre, or Harlequin in Lambeth.
143 Magic Grape, or Harlequin Wine-Merchant.
144 Sea Serpent, or Harlequin Yankee.
145 Harlequin Hum, Harlequin Strum, and Harlequin Mum.
146 Harlequin Patchwork.

Versified and adapted to the Surrey for Mr. Elliston.

"The Cabinet," "Il Bondocani," "Fontainebleau," "Lodoiska," "Peeping Tom," "Tag in Tribulation," "Garrick's Jubilee," "Harlequin's Invasion," "Finger-Post," "Mayor of Garratt."

Altered on my own account for the Surrey.

"Constantine and Valeria," from Miss Joanna Baillie's "Constantine Palæologus;" "Murdered Guest," from "Fatal Curiosity;" "Italian Wife," from "Fazio;" "Lucretia, the Abbot of San Martino," from Major Parlby's tragedy; "The Prophecy, or Giant Spectre," from "The Count of Narbonne;" "Knights of Rhodes," from Sir J. B. Burgess's play; "The Victim," from the tragedy of Rayner, "The Mysterious Bride;" "The Duke and the Devil," from Garrick's "Duke and No Duke," and "The Christmas

Tale;" also my father's speaking pantomime of "The Touchstone," which Mr. O'Keeffe, in his "Recollections," erroneously attributes to Mr. Garrick. Addresses and single songs very numerous.

SADLER'S WELLS.

Three-act Operatic Melo-dramas.

147 Beauty in a Box, or Adventures of a Vizier's Daughter.

148 Abyssinia, or British Travellers.

149 Enchanted Girdle, or Winki the Witch and Ladies of Samarcand.

150 Peacock's Feather, or the Grand Caravan.

Burlettas, Melo-drames, and Musical Farces.

151 Alonzo and Imogine.

152 John of Calais.

153 Death of David Rizzio.

154 Ruins of Paluzzi, or Black Penitent.

155 Rival Loyalists, or Shela's Choice.

156 Village Ghost.

157 Gaffer's Mistake.

158 Prospect of Peace.

159 British Raft.

160 Jane of Pentonville.

161 Here we Are, or the Old Ship new-timbered.

162 The Great Gentleman in the Little Parlour.

163 The Man and the Marquis.

164 The Devil's in Doctor Faustus.

165 Garrick and his Double.

166 Jacko.

167 Spread Eagle.

168 East and West.

169 All a Fetch.

170 Pennyworth of Wit.

171 Magician, or Invisible Hand.

Comic Pantomimes.

172 The Talisman of Orosmanes, or Harlequin Made Happy.

173 Sadak and Kalasrade, or the Waters of Oblivion.

174 The Catacombs, or Harlequin in Egypt.*

175 Harlequin and Hudibras.*

176 Fairy Red and Fairy Blue, or Harlequin and the Marble Rock.

177 Merlin's Mount, or Harlequin and the Living Leek.

178 Hot and Cold, or Harlequin Snowball.

Addresses and single songs for Dighton, Davis, Williams, &c. &c.

ASTLEY'S AMPHITHEATRE.

Burlettas.

179 Blind Man's Buff, or Who Pays the Reckoning?

180 Two Sides of the Question.

181 The Glazier.

Pantomimes.

182 The Pirate, or Harlequin Woodcutter.

183 The High-mettled Racer, or Harlequin on Horseback.

184 Columbus, (serious pantomime in three acts, purchased, but not yet acted.)

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

185 Toss'd in a Blanket, (Farce in two acts.)

186 Old Nick, (musical entertainment in three acts, for M. Alexandre.)

* Purchased by the theatre, but not yet acted.

LYCEUM CIRCUS. (*prior to building the English Opera-House.*)

187 Lover's Trial, (Burletta.)

188 The Auctioneer, (musical bagatelle.)

189 The Whirligig, (ditto.)

Musical Entertainments.

190 The Sprite, or the Power of Fancy; three acts, performed by myself in the City, at Preston, Bury, and Rochdale.

191 Something New and Nothing New, performed with Mr. Townsend, at Colchester.

192 Melange, in three acts, written and performed by myself for Brother Cecil's benefit at Chelmsford, and afterwards repeated gratuitously for the benefit of a musical artist. Mr. Reeve accompanied the songs.

193 One of Mr. Incledon's three-act entertainments, called "The Wandering Melodist."

194 The Irishman's Rhapsody, in three acts, performed by Paddy Webb.

Part of "Bannister's Budget;" and a Melange in three acts, for Mr. Elliston, performed at Wells.

Miscellaneous.

195 A volume of Fugitive Essays, &c. in prose and verse, published at Huddersfield in 1794.

196 Metrical History of England, two volumes.

197 My own Biography.

198 Islington Stage, } Burlettas produced at Sadler's Wells at Christmas, 1826-7.
199 Spain and Portugal, }

Eighteen or twenty Essays, Tales, &c. for "The New Lady's Magazine;"—a number of similar articles for "Harrison's Gentleman's and Lady's Pocket Magazine," his "Biographic Magazine,"

and "C. Dibdin and Bacon's Cabinet Magazine;" a regular series of leading articles for a very popular publication during some months, with many other papers, &c. many of which have been attributed to other authors. One comedy in particular, to which I rendered some essential services in the way of alteration for a friend, was extremely successful; and a dramatic critic of the day wound up his commendations of the very portions of it which I had suggested to the author, by saying—"Let such flimsy authors as Mr. T. Dibdin, and some others, profit by the specimen of legitimate comedy now set before them." I was also editor, for some months, of "The Monthly Epitome," published by Mr. Clarke, of Bond-street, in the year 1798.

A jolly profession this of ours, is n't it?

Frederick Reynolds.

Of the above nearly two hundred theatrical productions, ten were failures, and not acted more than four or five times each on an average; sixteen were honoured with extraordinary success, and produced very great profits to Covent-Garden, Drury-Lane, the Haymarket, the English Opera, and three of the minor theatres; the remainder were all extremely well received, and

answered my purpose, and the expectations of those who employed me. Nearly fifty of the pieces are published, and books of the songs of thirty more;—and my reason for not having printed the remainder is, that I never, but in two instances, would publish on my own account. I never refused to sell when asked for a copy-right, and have very seldom solicited a publisher to purchase. It was formerly the custom for authors to dedicate their works to patrons of rank for the avowed purpose of receiving a *cadeau* in return. When I first had the good fortune to find booksellers not only with cash, but liberally ready to part with it, I embraced every opportunity of publishing to dedicate, or inscribe my attempts at writing, not with any view to remuneration, (by no means due, and then out of custom,) but as a mode of publicly acknowledging kindnesses already received. With this view, I inscribed certain productions of mine to the Duke of Leeds, Mr. Harris, Sir Henry Hawley, Mr. George Ranking, Mr. Fladgate, Mr. Bicknell, Mr. Evance, Mr. W. Cordy, &c. &c. of whom a minority only are now living. The farce of "St. David's Day" was inscribed to the inhabitants of Carmarthen and Haverfordwest, in grateful remembrance of much personal friendship received by my wife and self in both those towns.

Some years back I began writing a novel, which I christened "Westminster Bridge, or the Adventures of Archibald Adamson;"—a few chapters of which were published in the new series of "The Lady's Magazine." I began this romance at one end of the bridge, and meant to have finished it at the other; but my time having been much otherwise occupied, I left my hero looking over the balustrades of the centre arch, undetermined whether to return him to the busy cares and pleasures of the town,—to throw him fairly over the bridge,—or, after the example of his author, to injure his prospects by trying to better them, and place him in the classical purlieus of St. George's Fields, where prisons, play-houses, penitentiaries, and lunatic asylums open their doors in every direction. I had also advanced some way in a romance of real life, called "Roguery;" but booksellers disliked the title. I cannot say "*qui capit*," because they would not take it; at least, unless it got another name.

I have mentioned my having had the honour of being two or three times an "agreeable companion" in a post-chaise with Mr. John Kemble; and one of these *tête-à-tête* journeys occurred in consequence of the following letter of Mr. Harris, written from a sick bed at Belmont:—

Belmont, Sunday morning.

"My dear Dibdin,

"I have kept my bed almost ever since I saw you: at last I trust I am fast recovering, which you will very much expedite by information that you have entirely completed your opera. It is still so very uncertain when I shall be able to return to the theatre, that I would by no means have you delay giving the whole into the hands of the copyist, a single minute, on that account. It is most unfortunate for us the piece is not now ready to produce, and every single day will add to our distress. Don't wait for me, God bless you! but if you wish very earnestly that I should see your alterations finally, before you put them into Hill's hands, it will be kind and charitable in you to take a post-chaise to-morrow morning, and let me have the pleasure of seeing you and them together. If indisposition, or any other impediment arises, pray lose not a moment to consult with Mr. Kemble on every measure that may expedite the production of the piece. Best compliments to Mrs. Dibdin.

"Ever truly yours,

"T. HARRIS."

Annexed to this Mr. Henry Harris wrote:—

"Dear Sir,

"My father thinks that he will be strong enough to see you to-morrow morning; but I fear any agitation so early would be prejudicial to his health. If you will delay (on some pretext) coming down till Tuesday, I am confident you will find him then fitter for business, and you will oblige,

"Dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

"H. HARRIS."

In consequence of Mr. H. Harris's postscript, we did not go till the Tuesday; and, on our return, Mr. Kemble, after speaking very kindly of the opera then in rehearsal, which I believe was "The English Fleet," paused for a long time, and then suddenly asked,—"Dibdin, how many pieces for the stage have you written?"—"About fifty, I believe, Sir, or, probably, a greater number." Mr. Kemble again paused, as if to consider, and then exclaimed—"What a misfortune!!" then, leaning back in the chaise, relapsed into another pause, which lasted till we reached his house in Great Russell-street, where he insisted on my staying to dine with him, Mrs. Kemble, and that erudite antiquary, the late Mr. Lysons, of the Record-Office in the

Tower. "What a misfortune!" ejaculated Mr. Kemble.—Did he mean for me, or the public? With too much humility to imagine the first, and too much self-conceit to submit to the latter supposition,—I think the fairest mode of deciding, *pour sauver mon amour-propre*, will be to let John Bull and me share the hypothetical calamity between us.

At dinner, much approbation was expressed by Mr. Kemble of the decorations of Mr. Harris's house and grounds, which elicited my admiration of four figures by Roubiliac, that had been transported (on the alteration of Covent-Garden) from the proscenium of that house to the bottom of a walk in the garden at Belmont. In speaking of these beautiful specimens of art, I designated them *Termini*.—"Call them *Caryatides*, Dibdin!" said Mr. Kemble, with a corrective glance. I thanked my host, adding, that I always had called them *Caryatides* when they supported the cornice of Covent-Garden proscenium, but had imagined that their present detached abode, at the termination of a path in *another* garden, admitted of the distinction I had made, and which Mr. Kemble readily allowed: indeed, one of Mr. Harris's rustic gardeners seemed to have anticipated my opinion, when he said, twenty years ago, "Master ha' gotten

an obstacle at the end of every walk to exterminate the prospect." Mr. Harris had also the two large and beautiful profile figures of Melpomene and Thalia, painted by Cipriani: they were ingeniously let into the wainscot of his picture gallery, at some distance from each other; and the interval was beautifully filled up by the pencil of one of our first artists. Among a great number of portraits, including nearly all the theatrical talent of the last century, my pride was (I hope very excusably) gratified at seeing the representations of my wife and myself: they were painted by Charles Allingham, brother of the late dramatist; and Mr. Harris, on seeing them within a few days after they had been hung up in my house, remarked, that they were in the wrong place, and desired me to send them to Belmont immediately.

I had the melancholy pleasure (if pleasure could be here supposed) of dining at the Freemasons' Tavern on the day when Mr. Kemble received publicly a token of the high respect in which his talents were held, and the expression of heart-felt regret the public would suffer for the irreparable loss the retirement of so great an actor would occasion to the British stage. On that day I first saw Talma, and greatly admired the effective simplicity of expression with which,

after paying most liberal homage to Mr. Kemble, he acknowledged the kindness of the reception he himself had met with, and the honour that had been paid to his own professional merits, as well as to those of Mr. Kemble. This he did in good and well-accented English. But shall I, "a minnow among the tritons" of that intellectual assembly, venture to add, that, whether from expecting too much, or whether from the *sombre* stamp impressed on it by the cause of our assembling,—it was altogether a meeting very little in accordance with the feelings which carried me to it: it was (however well, respectfully, and affectionately meant) all too artificial. The solemn formality with which Mr. Young recited, in Mr. Campbell's splendid verse, Mr. Kemble's praises in his own presence; the common-place form of drinking Mr. Campbell's health and poetry; the necessary gravity of the speech which followed; and, finally, Mr. Kemble's reply, (to what at least should have been supposed an *extempore* tribute,) delivered from a previously written paper,—

plucked out the very heart of the mystery,

and must have lessened its effect upon the genuine feelings of all present. As a comic writer,

I, of course, shall not be deemed worthy of alexandrine and hexameter feelings; but I assure my minor acquaintance, that I went to the scene almost overpowered with reflections which would have disdained any thing like a public attempt to describe them; and nothing that was said or done seemed to sympathize with the *morne* sensibility with which I was overwhelmed. In the sincerity, and almost bursting sensations I experienced, I defy all the overpowering talent of the upper table, however they might have expressed their sentiments, to have gone beyond me: but, in truth, a downright English dinner, which should only celebrate a joyful event, could not possibly be in harmony with the sense of such a real calamity as the exit of John Kemble.

One circumstance contributed much to distract my attention from the cause of our meeting. I happened to sit next to a meritorious young tragedian, whose intended wife being in the ladies' gallery, the gentleman was so completely absorbed in the duties of distant courtship, and so entirely abstracted from all else in the room, that while he appeared to be praising the poetic inspiration of Campbell, the impressive enunciation of Young, the straight-forward eloquence of Talma, and the unaffected feeling of Mr. Kemble's

last public reading,—his eyes were so much at variance with his accents, that I saw his lady had credit (in his idea) for every attribute his tongue assigned to others. With respect to the general effect of the day, it was much superior in anticipation to the reality. Could a veil have been drawn between us and the great man, during certain orations, as the artist of old curtained the grief he could not describe,—imagination would have trebled the effect. Six years afterwards I was one of the numerous and sincere mourners who had to lament the misfortune of Mr. Kemble's removal from the drama of real life. I grieve to add, I could enumerate from fifteen to twenty others, who sat with me at the farewell dinner I have just attempted to describe, who have either preceded, or followed Mr. Kemble, to "another and a better world."

I shall close this scene by observing that my mind, during the entire day, was occupied by the idea that Mr. Kemble was situated nearly as he used to be when performing the part of Rolla after death, and obliged to listen to dirges in celebration of his worth, from lips which had hitherto greeted him with delight and gladness.

In enumerating the dramatic pieces which I have attempted, I, of course, have omitted a great number which I have either destroyed, or

which are now lying dormant in my portfolio for revision, should favourable circumstances demand them. Among those, however, which probably will never see the light, is an opera which I wrote to oblige an Hon. and Rev. clergyman, who being very anxious to acquire the fleeting and uncertain reputation of a dramatist, wished to have something he might call his own. He gave me, as a sort of prototype, the first scene of a musical non-descript piece, which began with—" Enter two angels and a fisherman," which, I believe, he has shown to many others. I, however, arranged something in two acts which Mr. B*** approved; and a foreign composer was employed to *do* the music, which also was to pass as the composition of the Hon. and Rev. divine. When all was finished, I received a formal card of invitation to dine with a party in Portland-street, and hear Mr. A. B.'s opera read, and his music performed. I expected that this latter part of the entertainment would prove a treat beyond the turtle and champagne; and therefore, with great glee, I attended the invitation. I must premise that I had taken the trouble of scribbling without any view to remuneration; nor would I hear of any, because, knowing the piece would never come before the public, I certainly had not taken quite

as much pains with it as I should have done had I been writing for Mr. Harris. I was promised, however, that all my boys should be provided for (I had none at that time), and that my girls (who, God bless them! were no more) should be introduced to ladies who would be the making of them. At Mr. B.'s lodgings I met the then Earl of Barrymore, the present Lord Petersham, the late Doctor Hoadley Ashe, and several other gentlemen of rank and literary pretension, as also the *incognito* composer of the music, and two or three of the opera band who were to assist in the accompaniments. Whether the noble and learned auditory meant it as a hoax or no, I can't say; but the moment our Hon. and Rev. host began to read, exclamations of "charming!" "bravo!" and "hear! hear!" came so thick on him, that he could never completely finish any one sentence. The company, observing that I did not applaud so warmly as the rest, rallied me on my professional jealousy, and pointed out several passages as "delightfully pretty." I could only reply, that I came to give my candid opinion, and would do that with as much tenderness as if I had written the piece myself. As the glass circled freely between the jokes, every succeeding one seemed to "go down" better than the last, till the composer came to a song

I had written for Munden, which the signor played with the greatest pathos, and sang so *espressivo* in broken English, that I was obliged to make a temporary exit to indulge in a laugh which it was totally out of my power to repress: the song was a comic version of "The Waggoner and Hercules," intended to be given in the character of a countryman, and acted with humour as broad as the wheels of his own waggon; the first lines were,—

> A waggoner, seeing his waggon stuck fast
> In the mud, began crying for aid:

and when the singer got into the *modt* as he pronounced it, he made a cadence so "out of all cess," as Shakspeare's Carrier says, that—

> Hercules himself, do what he might,—

could never have helped me out of the scrape, if I had not, as before said, left the room. Yet such is the influence of good breeding in some circles, that no one but myself seemed inclined to move a muscle. Doctor Hoadley Ashe, one of the guests, (lately dead,) was nephew of Doctor Hoadley who wrote "The Suspicious Husband." I had the pleasure of sitting next Dr. Ashe at dinner, when he began a story with—"As eleven of my daughters and I were crossing Picca-

dilly,—"—" Eleven of your daughters, Doctor?" I rather rudely interrupted. " Yes, Sir," rejoined the Doctor, " I have nineteen daughters all living; never had a son; and Mrs. Ashe, myself, and nineteen female *Ashe plants,* sit down one-and-twenty to dinner every day. Sir, I am smothered with petticoats."

In each of the little excursions we made into the West of England to visit Mrs. Dibdin's relatives, we always passed a portion of our holiday at Stourhead in Wiltshire, close to the celebrated seat of Sir Richard Colt Hoare. As all strangers are allowed free access to the beautiful and classic gardens and grounds, I liberally availed myself of the permission; and, on my first visit, struck as I was with so splendid an assemblage of the loveliest treasures of nature and art, I coxcomically thought I could not do less, in gratitude to the lord of the domain, than write something about Virgil, and Mantuan elegance, and classic lore, to help to perpetuate the charms of Stourhead; (remember this was twenty-one years back;) and I accordingly pencilled these verses on a conspicuous tablet in front of the Temple of Flora:—

For many a calm reflective hour
Enjoy'd around thy lovely banks,
Reject not, silver-headed Stour!
A wandering minstrel's humble thanks.

Ye too, of Nymph and Dryad train,
Who unbeheld around me play,
To you I dedicate the strain,—
The grateful, though unpolish'd lay.

And thou, the master of this scene!
Where Attic and Lavinian taste
Adorn alike the alley green,
The grot retired, or mimic waste,—

Could but my glowing thoughts appear
With wish'd-for force in every line,
A second Maro thou shouldst hear,
And more than Mantuan praise be thine.

As Sir Richard was then at Stourton, I had not a doubt in my own mind, but that, flattered by this elegant tribute to his taste from an unknown bard, he would, as an acknowledged Mecænas, be anxious to discover from whence the *morceau* came; but hearing of no inquiries, I took an opportunity of entering into conversation with one of the gardeners,—a plain sample of Zomerzet and Wiltshire blended; and, nearly as I can recollect, this was our dialogue:—

Poet. Beautiful spot this, gardener!

Gard. Which, Zur?

Poet. Which? why this, Sir! the whole of it —the gardens, the grounds, the grottoes, the walks, trout-streams, bridges, and *temples*.

Gard. Why, yeez, Zur! I've heard a many zay zo, bezides you.

Poet. Heard many *say* so! don't you believe them then?

Gard. Yez, Zur! I believe what all the gentry do zay: they zee all these beauties the minnut they zet voot in the place; but I ha been here zo many years, that I—that is—I ha gott'n a bit *used* to em, Zur!

Poet. That's very natural; we are never sensible of the blessings that surround us. *(with theatrical emphasis.)*

Gard. Zur!

Poet. I mean—but surely you must always find something new to admire?

Gard. O yez, Zur! there be often zummat new: Sir Richard be every now and then bringing down new old *statutes,* and gods, and *curus* tombs and things from London, and Bristol, and Bath,—and very partikkler he be about them. Why now—you zee that, Zur? that be the Temple of Vlora.

Poet. O yes, I admired it much two days ago, and I——

Gard. *(interrupting)* Why then, Zur, I never did zee Zur Richard zo angry as he were yesterday: he ha just had that ere temple new done up, and smart it do look too; and one of the cockney customers at Missus Hilliar's inn ha

been and scratched a parcel o' d—d nonsense on it, and spoiled the clean stone-work wi' all manner o' balderdash; and Zur Richard ha told his gentleman to tell Mr. Davis, the house-steward, to tell Mr. Hilliar, that if that ere chap do scrawl any more o' his Lunnun stuff on *our perry stiles* and *vesty bools*, that the gardens shall be shut up to all as comes to Stourhead Inn again.

Reader! I entered the gardens with a sneaking sort of hope that I might meet the baronet, and receive his "Tribute to the Muse;" and now, a sneaking sort of fear lest I *should* meet him, carried me towards my inn like a —— but I was in no humour for similes. I set Sir Richard down for a barbarian devoid of taste, whose ancestors alone were entitled to the immortality my verse meant to confer on him; and remained very little altered in my opinion till I had the pleasure of meeting him at a large dinner party, some years afterwards, in the hospitable mansion of Mr. Symmons, of Paddington-House. Sir Richard paid me great attention; and his carriage, either not being in town, or his servants mistaking the hour, I had the honour of accompanying him home in Mr. Symmons's landau. When I confessed my violation of the Temple of

Flora, Sir Richard politely pretended to apologize for his gardener's sincerity; and we both laughed heartily over my Stourhead inspirations.

The lines in question having found their way into the Morning Post and the Monthly Mirror, before I got back to town, I received, at my return, an *impromptu* on them from my friend, the late Mr. George Ranking:—

To Mr. T. Dibdin, on his lines written in the gardens at Stourhead.

Possess'd by the Muses, you slyly exclaim
 "Unbeheld" were the nymphs that are Stour's,
That suspicion may taint not your chastity's fame;
 For they are notoriously *Hoare's.*

Yet the bankers of Fleet-street have rural retreats,
 And this summer your steps have beguiled;—
The wood-nymphs, next spring, should you visit their seats,
 We may probably hear are with *Child.*

Yours, G. R. *ad libitum.*

In writing on a serious subject at Stourhead, I gave more satisfaction, though a very melancholy one. A very amiable young woman, related to my wife, and daughter of the family we were visiting, was suddenly consigned to an early tomb. On a plain and simple stone in Stourton church-yard, the following lines were, after

due perusal and approval by Mr. Partridge, the resident clergyman, permitted to be engraved :—

The soul, which here its mouldering frame hath left,
Was duteous, kind, and gentle while on earth;
And many a friend, dear maid! of thee bereft,
With tearful eye deplores thy modest worth.
Mistaken friends! to mourn, when Heaven ordains
That virtue shall be freed from mortal pains!

CHAP. XV.

1826.

Au Revoir!

Symptoms of separation à la Fielding—Death of Mr. Connor—And of Michael Kelly—Tales of terror—Disputations with Madame Bolla—Hair-breadth 'scape of Henry Johnston—Messrs. Kemble, Cooke, Kelly, and Incledon, in the character of Harlequin—Attempt at Kelly's epitaph—Mr. Whitbread's private theatricals—Rev. Mr. Plumptre, at once a zealous reformer and liberal defender of theatricals—Death of Talma—Fatalities—The Lottery—Increase of London amusements—Private theatres—Autobiographical road-book—Running to seed—Lamented loss to the Drama—Concluding lines to the Bard of Poor Jack.

> Parting is such sweet sorrow,
> That I could say good night until 't were morrow.

AWARE though I am that it is a sort of high treason to imagine a fault in Fielding, just as it would be to say a syllable derogatory to Shakspeare; I always thought it a droll oversight in

the prince of novelists, that in his last chapter he should take a long and affectionate leave of his readers, who, of course, while he was yet writing, had never read him. However, as it is necessary sometimes to follow great examples, good or bad, I have, in the motto to this my last chapter, hung out, as it were, as brief a sign of leave-taking as possible. I was going to say, in front of said chapter, that it is

Last of all,
That ends this strange eventful history:

but then the critics would have added, 'tis also—

Second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans taste, *sans* tact, *sans* laugh, *sans* every thing.

We began our first chapter with childhood; and if we find nothing worse than mediocrity between its two extremes, I shall think myself *in medio tutissimus*. I once also thought that "Farewell! remember me!" would have been a good dramatic valedictory motto; but not choosing to bid good-bye before we have said "How d' ye do?"—we will take leave of the subject altogether.

I am sorry to add to my already too ample obituary, that on October 7th Mr. Connor, of

Covent-Garden Theatre, (a gentleman to whom I had been lately introduced,) dropped suddenly dead in Hyde Park. On the 11th, the good-natured and universally esteemed Michael Kelly, with whom I had many years the pleasure of being on terms of intimacy, closed a life, which I verily believe was passed without his scarcely ever having felt a sentiment of ill-will towards an individual of his species, or having experienced a token of dislike. Innumerable are the stories told of poor Mick, and most of his Hibernicisms, about as true as those formerly related in "My Pocket Book," and other *monstrous clever* publications, by the author of "Old Nick," (whom I have had the honour to meet at my table,) about Tom Dibdin and his wife Nancy, and their "out-of-school" conversations over the fooleries of a friendly dessert. Such were the jokes about Mick's being supposed to say to one friend, at the door of another, "Scrape for me, while I knock for both of us:" and when asked "Why do you wear boots in summer, Kelly?"—"Because they keep the dust out of one's shoes:" again, "You have taken no exercise to-day, Mike!"—"Oh, but I made up for it yesterday." When Mr. Kelly lived near the Opera House, I remember his calling on me one day, about Christmas, in a

hack, to take me to his home to meet Madame Bolla, Signors Naldi, Morelli, and some other musical "stars," at a dinner party. As our way lay through Windmill-street, I asked Kelly to permit my making a momentary visit to the late eminent surgeon, Mr. James Wilson, with whom I had the pleasure of many years intimacy, and who then occupied the spacious mansion, museum, and anatomical theatre of the celebrated John Hunter. Kelly, of course, made no objection to my calling, but begged to wait for me in the coach, which I would not hear of: Kelly gave as a reason, that he had an insurmountable antipathy to the bare idea of any thing relating to anatomy; and having heard of many frolics practised by surgical students upon their friends, he felt averse from entering a house which he understood was full of subjects, skeletons, and preparations. I assured him that all those affairs were at the back of the premises, and perfectly detached from the part of the house we should visit. The door opening while I spoke, we walked in together; and I left Kelly in a parlour, while the servant conducted me to Mr. Wilson. In the apartment where this able professor of the knife and probe (which he applied only, as the critics do, (ahem!) to "mend, and not to wound,") was sitting, was a large table,

on which I distinctly saw three naked bodies extended, their heads hanging over the edge of the board, and an attendant, who instantly, on my entrance, threw a cloth over them, at the same time remarking to his master, that they were the finest and cheapest he had ever seen. How much I was surprised, and whether or not as greatly alarmed as poor Kelly would have been, the reader will hereafter determine: at the time, I affected to take no notice, but briefly paid my compliments, and stated the cause of my intrusion, which was a message to the surgeon from my friend Mr. Lewis, then an invalid. Wilson pressed me to stay dinner: I told him of my pre-engagement; and Mr. Wilson, on learning Mr. Kelly was in the house, went and fetched him into the *sanctum sanctorum*. I then jokingly rallied Kelly on his fears, the nature of which I related to Wilson, who laughed heartily, adding, "I am sure, Mr. Kelly, upon reflection, would be more pleased than alarmed if he were to inspect three subjects I have bought this morning."—"B-b-bou-bought?" stammered Kelly. "Yes," replied Wilson; "I purchased them of a man who provides me with such things from a ground in the country."—"And how do you get them conveyed?" asked I. "By the stage," said Wilson,

very coolly: "and as these are uncommonly beautiful, and perfectly fresh, though they came a great way, if you have a coach at the door, you shall carry which of the three you please home with you." Kelly was too much astonished to make any reply; but, his back being towards the table, which he had not yet perceived, and to which Wilson advanced,—Mike kept retreating, and deprecating any further mention of the subject, or rather *subjects;* when his retrograde progress, *Hibernice*, being suddenly impeded by the board behind him, he instinctively extended his arm to save himself from a fall; and never shall I forget the climax of horror his countenance exhibited when his hand pressed on the clay-cold bosom of as beautiful a ready-plucked Christmas turkey as ever came from the poultry-ground of a Norfolk dealer. Wilson immediately removed the cloth; and I need not attempt to describe the hearty laugh which followed the unlooked-for *éclaircissement*, nor the complete change of sentiment in Kelly as to admitting the finest of the three unplumed corses into the coach with us. This adventure served for "sweet discourses" after dinner, when the turkey was introduced in corroboration of the anecdote; and it gave the ever-hospitable Michael an opportunity of indulging his liberal inclinations by re-

inviting the whole party to assist in dissecting the subject on a future day. During the dessert, I recollect that Madame Bolla, though otherwise an exceedingly pleasant lady, was, in her broken English, very severe on English music, then on English singers, and lastly on English actors. "Your popular music," said the signora, "is all twoity, twoity, twoity;" and exemplified it by caricaturing the then very fashionable air of "Cory Owen." "Your singers want to be *piu poco espressivo;* and your actors—" Here my patience had reached its extent; and, most unpardonably, I ventured to interrupt my fair adversary's stream of eloquence, by endeavouring to say emphatically—"But, Mrs. Siddons, Madam!"—"Ah, for de Siddons, dat is solitary exception to general *règle.*"—"And Mr. Kemble, Madam! not only a classic actor, but, look at his *manièrè!* observe the beauty of his commanding figure!"—"Oh! for de Kemble—dam beauty man, to be sure!" Here Mrs. Crouch interposed; and our Momus of a Mike, as president, gave some good-natured toast in Italian, with sufficient of the Irish accent to add to its comic effect; and we left the point perfectly unsettled till the next meeting, which, as Kelly would have said, by some accident never took place. Madame Bolla added another very whimsical instance of accent and idiom, which raised

a good-natured laugh. An amateur attendant of the Italian Opera of that day, had been formerly rather grossly characterised to Madame B. as the "*greatest puppy* in the world." Kelly asked her if he had been rightly described to her; to which the lady answered, "Certainly, I have found him one of the largest small dogs in the universe!" I related this soon after at a theatrical party, and heard it, a few weeks subsequently, repeated as a joke in a farce at that time in rehearsal.

I believe I have mentioned, that in celebration of the success of "The Cabinet," the author, composers, and performers engaged in that opera, with their visitors, dined together at Townsend's Tavern, at Kennington. Kelly was asked, as a common friend, but could not attend. On relating to him afterwards the occurrences of that merry feast, I had to tell him, that Mr. Henry Johnston was particularly entertaining during the whole day. We met, before dinner, in a very large parlour with a bow window looking into the garden; the whole apartment a *fac-simile* of the one above, in which we were to dine. To Englishmen, few moments are more irksome than those immediately preceding an expected good dinner; but, in the present instance, they were rendered any thing but tedious by the successful endeavours of a large assem-

blage of talent mutually to entertain each other. Harry Johnston was conspicuous. Among other modes of amusing us, he *supposed* that Messrs. Kemble, Cooke, Kelly, Incledon, Dignum, Braham, and several other leaders in their respective departments, were obliged, by some irresistible authority, to undertake the part of Harlequin. He first gave, in a good style of individual imitation, *what* he conceived each gentleman would say, and *how* he would say it, in the way of remonstrance against such a wanton misapplication of his respective talents: he then proceeded, in uncouth comic action, to show how each would "*do* this thing;" concluding the whole of a very rich and ludicrous exhibition by taking a real leap out of the ground-floor window into the garden: this, of course, was greatly applauded, and much spoken of after dinner over the fruit and wine; when a gentleman, who had joined us too late to be a witness of a scene worthy of Mathews in his best moments, entreated the favour of a repetition, and was unanimously seconded: the bottle had circulated pretty freely among the gentlemen; the bow-window was open for air; and, after receiving "increased applause" on his "second representation," poor Henry Johnston, enthusiastically full of his subject, disdaining to recollect on how

much higher ground he stood than while performing his first essay, actually concluded by unconsciously leaping out of the one-pair of stairs window. The screams of terror from the ladies, and the terrific alarm of the men, (no one having imagined he would really make the leap,) could only be equalled by the loud, unanimous, and sincere expressions of congratulation which greeted Harry on his instantly running up stairs, perfectly unhurt. When, in telling the story to Kelly, I had thus arrived at the close, "By the powers!" exclaimed Mike, "Harry 's mad: his leap was as absurd as his making me act Harlequin.—What could induce him?" "Why," replied I, "it was not very unnatural: in the warmth of the instant, carried away by the *cacoethes ludendi*, ("that's Latin," said Kelly,) he forgot he had walked up a flight of stairs before dining."—"Or, perhaps," rejoined Kelly, "he thought the room below had walked up stairs with him."

On Kelly asking what Harry had made his actors say respecting their unfitness or incapability for such a character as the pantomimic hero, I had, from recollection, to tell him nearly as follows:—

Mr. Kemble, walking (in lieu of tripping)

round with great deliberation—"I have blacked my face for Othello, for Oronooko, and for Zanga; but for a thing of shreds and patches!—to skip!—to trip!—if it were done, 't were well it were done quickly!—to leap!—By Heaven, methinks it were an *easy* leap To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon; but, in *this* leap, what broken bones may come, puzzles the will, lest we, upon this bank and shoal of time, should jump the life to come,—like vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself, and falls on the other." *(Jumps through the scene.)*

Mr. Cooke, making short-armed attitudes—"To what base uses may we not return! A fool! a motley fool! I have been a fool all my life! but to change the sword of Richard for a dagger of lath! to make Iago a dom'd black-sheep! this a Toledo! and I, that am not form'd for tricks like these, must caper nimbly in a lady's chamber, fly through trap-doors, tumble on mattresses, and be in danger of my life by the edge of a feather-bed! Here 's an aperture for a man of my havings to enter! If 't were a bottle of sack, I could get through it well enough." *(Tumbles clumsily into the leap, and presents his face from the other side of the opening.)* "Gentlemen, I see through my error."

Mr. Kelly.—"Ajuto! If it was one of Goldoni's Harlequins, I could make a Lazzi, or join in a trio with Mezzetin and Scaramouch; but, Otsplut! what would Sheridan, or Cobb, or George Colman, or Mrs. Crouch say, to see Lord William, or Selim, or Carlos, or the composer of 'Blue-beard,' jump through a passage with a running accompaniment?"—(*Leaps, but misses the opening, and falls backwards.*) "It 's the fault of the Irish carpenters; they made the hole on the other side."—*Exit.*

Mr. Incledon.—"I'll be judged by any body: ask my friend Dowton, the old Cacique; ask Cacofogo, my dear boy! whether Charles Incledon is fit to play Harlequin. What is Harlequin? can he sing 'Old Towler' or 'The Thorn?' is he like Billy Shield, or Rauzzini, or Jackson of Exeter, or little Davy? can he compose, or can he open 'The Messiah?' can his black face give 'Black-Eyed Susan?' will his tricks produce 'Sally in our Alley,' or his magic conjure any thing like 'The Storm?' A pantomime isn't an opera, my dear fellow! Can Macheath, when 'his pistols miss fire,' and 'his mare slips her shoulder, when she is pursued,' change Peachum into a poll-parrot; or can Young Meadows, when he leaves his father's house 'on the 15th

of June,' turn Justice Woodcock into a wig-block? What would Tommy Harris say, and Sloper, and Farley, to see 'Harlequin Hawthorn, or the Wandering Melodist,' and Charles Incledon in 'The Quaker,' while singing 'The Lads of the Village,' transmogrified from Old Steady into

> The high-mettled racer
> Is in at the death?—(*Leaps.*)

If I were to write poor Kelly's epitaph, I should be tempted to say of him,—

> Here lies (and you seldom have met with his like
> For simple sincerity) good-natured Mike:
> His rich native humour, his purse, heart, and table,
> With genuine welcome, he gave you while able:
> No sycophant he, as true candour must vouch;
> Though without any disinclination to *Crouch.*
> To those who were "pleased to be pleased," few could bring
> More talent for rational mirth; let him sing,
> Say, mimic, or blunder, he kept up the ball;
> Was severe upon none, unaffected to all:
> He pleased, by a manner completely his own,
> The theatre, festival, cottage, or throne:
> Placed high on a sixpenny seat, none so low
> But cried "Bravo, Mike Kelly!" or, next, would you go
> To see Michael where rank with philanthropy reign'd,
> You'd find to invite him his king not disdain'd.

Though puritan zeal Mike's profession should curse,
Such self-esteem'd betters than him may prove worse:
For tranquil, nay, cheerful, to death he resign'd him,
When he left many saints, and more sinners behind him.

In addition to my sincere regret for the loss of Michael Kelly, I have to add a tribute of respectful feeling to the memory of Mrs. Lewis, the widow of my oft-mentioned and much-lamented friend;—a feeling much ameliorated by the knowledge that the good-hearted lady left us full of years, and embalmed in the affectionate and respectful recollections of all her numerous friends and admirers.

Having given the reader, from Mr. Whitbread's letters, some insight into that gentleman's ideas of public theatrical management, it may not be unacceptable to present him as at the head of a private theatre, surrounded by his family and friends, at his Southill residence, where a burlesque announcement of an evening's Thespian festivity, free to all his neighbours, was thus circulated:—

A Company of Comedians,

Having obtained Permission of the Rev. James Webster, and other the Worshipful Justices of this Division, intend,

Under the Special Patronage of the

Right Hon. the LADY ELIZABETH WHITBREAD,

At the Fair of Southill,

To attempt the Performance of a

VILLAGE SCENE,

CALLED THE

HAPPY RETURN.

The characters by the manager and his family were thus announced, and performed as under:—

Henry, *Lover of Nancy* .	Mr. W. Whitbread.
William, *a Sailor, brother of Nancy* . . .	Mr. Charles Sheridan.
Morris } *Vagabonds* . .	Mr. S. Whitbread, Jun.
Jervis } *Vagabonds* . .	Mr. S. Reynolds, Jun.
Margery, *Mother of William and Nancy* . . .	S. Whitbread, Esq. M.P.
Nancy, *betrothed to Henry* . .	Miss Whitbread.

After which will be represented

A VERY DEEP TRAGEDY

Founded on *real* facts, called

FATAL DUPLICITY,

OR,

THE LOVES OF EGLANTINE.

Sir Buntybart, a fat knight, in love with Eglantine, and beloved in his turn,

Mr. REMEY, (Mr. C. F. Meyer.)

Sir Brandywine, a fierce knight also in love with Eglantine, but slighted by the lady,

Mr. DOLREYNS, (Reynolds, Sen.)

Ghost, by Mr. REMEY, deceased.

Pages and Devils, Messrs. SONLEE (Leeson), TOWNSEND, BOON the younger, the smallest of the two ISHERWOODS, &c. &c.

Eglantine, beloved by Sir Buntybart and Sir Brandywine, by a VERY YOUNG LADY, (Mr. Whitbread.)

Prompter, Mr. Grey Sonlee, who kindly undertakes, for two nights only, to stand chargeable with all errors and defects.

*** The Play to begin whenever Her Ladyship pleases.

On account of the extraordinary demand for applause upon such occasions, no hisses can possibly be admitted.

The audience may clap as much as they like.

BLESS THE JUSTICES, AND GIVE US A GOOD SUPPER!!!

The Rev. James Plumptre, of Great Gransden Vicarage, had long stood forward as a liberal opposer of several very fastidious writers against the stage; while, at the same time, he strongly deprecated the frequent introduction of immoral, indelicate, or profane allusions in the drama; and published a sort of "corrected theatre," instancing, in numerous plays, how such irregularities might be avoided. It was no light gratification for me to receive from such a character a voluntary compliment on several of my pieces which he had seen acted at Norwich; as well as respecting some of my songs, which he had inserted in a large selection of what he styled "Moral and Entertaining Lyrics." I subjoin part of a letter I was favoured with some time back by the same worthy clergyman, on a subject which seems to have been with him a very serious object of attention:—

Great Gransden Vicarage, Oct. 18th.

"Sir,

"I am much obliged by the friendly manner in which you have taken my intrusion, and for your obliging offer of the freedom of the Surrey Theatre for myself and friend: should I be in London again soon, I would certainly avail myself of it, and give myself the pleasure of waiting on you to talk over the subject of

the stage. I really think the work of reformation is going on upon it, and blessed will be all those who contribute towards it. I sent copies of my three volumes of songs for you to Rivingtons: I have sent copies of my 'English Drama Purified' to most managers in the United Kingdom; and send one for your acceptance, requesting you to read it and consider the subject, especially as stated in the tract on the lawfulness of the stage accompanying the third volume. I also send a few specimens of tracts of songs, intended for circulation among the poorer classes, in which number I have put some of yours. I have not the pleasure of knowing much of your writings; but from what I have seen, I judge them to be generally of a moral tendency. 'The School for Prejudice' I saw some years ago, and thought you had very ably introduced the parable of 'the wicked servant:' 'The Birth-day,' and 'The Jew and the Doctor,' I have read, and was much pleased with them; and also with 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' though under the disadvantageous form of a burletta. I was sorry to hear you were confined, when I called, to a sick bed. With best wishes for your speedy recovery, believe me, dear Sir, with great respect,

"Yours very faithfully,

"James Plumptre."

The annexed was written a very short time previous to the death of Mr. Sheridan, and sent to me by Mr. Ward, to show to my brother manager, Mr. Rae: it is nearly the last autograph executed by the late sovereign of modern English comedy:—

Monday.

" My dear Friend,

" Believe me, that nothing, but it 's being absolutely out of my power, should prevent my being of your party to-day, which I wished particularly to join, but I cannot without serious risk of adding to my present ill health. I beg you will make my particular apologies to Mr. Rae and Mr. Dibdin. I have kept my carriage at the door above this hour, which I am now obliged to send with this excuse, most reluctantly.

" Ever yours,

" R. B. S."

Mr. Ward.

October 22d.—I have just heard that Talma is dead: I shall therefore never be able to avail myself of his invitation to Paris, nor (which is of immense importance) to see the portrait of myself, which he assured me he had placed in his picture-room. When I was (above

thirty years back) the prompter, painter, actor, and *homme d'affaires* of Messrs. Banks and Ward, at Chester,—Monsieur Talma's father lodged in the next house to me, and practised as a dentist. A Miss Daniels, (afterwards married to George Cooke, and now to Mr. Windsor, of Bath,) with her mother, also lodged in the same house with Talma, sen. Miss Daniels, at that time, had a completely foreign accent, and was practising a song in Dudley Bates's opera of "The Woodman," in which there was a frequently repeated passage of "Tell me, tell me, tell me,"—which Miss Daniels mispronounced "Tall ma, Tall ma, Tall ma!"—Mr. Talma, sen., who was in the room above, hearing these words given with so much expression, imagined the young lady was suffering from the tooth-ache, and wanted his assistance: he selected his terrific instruments; and, peeping in at the siren's door, with a crimson night-cap on, exclaimed—"You want me, Miss? here I am!—I take out your toose *incessamment*, and I prevent you make dat discordant noise again." It would be superfluous to add, that Mrs. Daniels speedily chased the mistaken foreigner from the door.

The old lady took so strong an interest in the nightly reception of her daughter at the theatre, that while the young lady was singing,

the mother, from mere nervous affection, while standing at the side of the scenes, was in the habit of pulling all the pins out of her dress, and letting them fall on the ground: thus, if Miss Daniels happened (as was frequently the case) to be *encored* in a tolerably long song, mamma was very nearly undressed before her daughter arrived at the end of it. The old lady was very partial to me as Mr. Merchant; but when I resumed my paternal appellation, its pronunciation puzzled her greatly; and when I accidentally met her in the streets of Bath, she dragged me away, and thus introduced me to her daughter with her unconquerable dialect:—"Here, my dear! is your old friend mit a new name; here is Mr. Pigden!"

I cannot take a final leave of a subject connected with George Cooke without inserting a genuine whimsical letter I lately received from a namesake of his, whose pursuits and attainments were of a very different hue from those of the first-named George; the writer being, as will be perceived, a plain pains-taking bricklayer:—

"Sir,

"As I have bean Used to *Dew* the work of The Theater and have bean Used to all Parts of the house I hope you will have the goodness

to let me *dew* what little gobs you have to *dew* this time ass Well as before I shall *dew* my endever to give you Satisfaction as far ass itt lays in my power.

"Sir I Hope you will Excuse my taking the the leberty of Righting to you.

"From your Humble Servant,

"G Cook, Bricklayer."

Mr. Dibden, Esq.

The following, which was received the same day, is not unworthy of its predecessor:—

"*To Mr. T. Dibdin, Esq. Pripetor of the Royal Circus.*

May 1st, 1817.

"Sir,

"I have taken the Liberty of Riting those few lines to ask you the favour if a Greeable for me to Come to your House, as i Can do a great many diferent things i Can Sing a good Song and i Can Eat Boiling hot Lead and Rub my naked arms With a Red hot Poker and Stand on a Red hot sheet of iron, and do Diferent other things.—Sir i hope you Will Excuse me in Riting I do not Want any thing for my Performing for i have Got a Businiss that will Support me I only Want to pass a Way 2 or 3 Hours in the Evening. Sir i hope

you Will Send me an Answer Weather Agreeoble or not.

"I am your Humble Servant,

"J. B.

"Direct to me No. 4 fox and Knot Court King Street Smithfield.

"JOHN BROOKS."

The next death I mention, as perfectly connected with my Autobiography, is that of the State Lottery. I had a trifling venture in it annually for many years; and the general returns were such, that although I am no gainer, I do not think the Lottery owes me any thing. I generally had a prize sufficient to save my purchase; and I only introduce the subject to enable me to relate the very extraordinary and well-authenticated incidents, which prove, that however near me, I never was destined to grasp a capital prize.

The first is trifling. I purchased a quarter of a ticket the season in which we were rehearsing Mr. Sotheby's tragedy of "Ina" at Drury-Lane: I thought I had committed a folly in thus adventuring, and did not mention it even to my wife. I did not register it; and for some time after the drawing closed, had not courage to examine the number. I had been in Drury-Lane

Theatre at a night rehearsal until about three in the morning; when feeling fatigued and unwell, my breakfast and the newspaper were, about nine o'clock, brought to my chamber: the first thing I saw was that Number 7731 was, "in the last lottery," drawn a prize of £20,000, and shared *in quarters* at Martin's Office. I instantly arose, shaved myself with an incredibly steady hand, and sent a confidential person to examine my quarter: he brought back a sealed letter, on opening which, I could see the words "Prize," and £20, and that was all. Mr. Martin had, in the previous lottery, sold the same number a £20,000, and, as a decoy, had kept his advertisement still in the newspapers.

I had scarcely recovered from this disappointment, when Mr. Bates, the brother of Mrs. Charles Dibdin, married, and brought his wife, and some of her family, to pass a day or two with us at a cottage we had at West End, Hampstead, the summer in which I was appointed, jointly with Mr. Rae, manager for the ensuing winter at Drury-Lane. Mr. Bates was a principal clerk in the office of Mr. Bish, and he told me he had sold every ticket and share committed to his custody for the next day's drawing, with the exception of a single whole ticket. I know you will censure my folly,

ladies and gentlemen! when I tell you that I said, "Robert, I wish I had that ticket! I think it would be fortunate:" and at length it was settled that I was to have it: Robert was to go to town earlier than usual, and buy it for me, before he should be obliged to return it to his employers. Now mark! his young wife, after dinner, was seized with a succession of severe hysteric fits: medical aid was sent for; my wife sat up nearly all night with the sufferer; the new-married husband was distracted; the ticket was forgotten; and his wife still remained too ill to allow of his going to town till the last moment on the Monday morning, prior to which his box was as usual opened, the ticket returned to the contractors, and on the same day drawn a £20,000 prize. The contractors offered Mr. Bates a silver tea-pot, for his luck in not having sold the ticket: he did not wish to possess so expensive an ornament, and they gave him an equivalent in cash.

Still more horrible! I had an uncommonly productive house, at the Surrey, one evening immediately preceding the drawing of the lottery; and I sent a messenger to my friend Mr. Carroll, rather late, at his dwelling in Oxford-street, to send me a WHOLE TICKET. I received it: Mr. Carroll had but two left, and he felt

two impulses: one was, to send both to me; the other, to keep one himself, which Mrs. Carroll wished him to do: he did neither. My ticket was drawn a fifty-pound prize; I gained thirty pounds by it: the other ticket was returned to the contractors; it was drawn a prize of £30,000! After these stupendous diappointments, it is but fair to say, that I had a quarter of a two-hundred-pound prize, and also received nine guineas for a half-crown adventure. With respect to any other adventurous speculations, I can, with retrospective pleasure, say, that I never, at any game of chance, lost five pounds at any one time, or ever won twice that sum in all my life.

The Royalty Theatre was the first instance of innovation which I recollect on the monopolies of the three Theatres Royal, and the three minor theatres of that day; and the present substitute for the Royalty, under the designation of the Whitechapel Road Pavilion, is the last I have seen opened. We were formerly in the habit of contrasting our limited catalogue of London entertainments with the more ample list of Parisian amusements; but few readers are aware that our evening public temples of Thalia, Melpomene, Polyhymnia, and Terpsichore, in the metropolis, at one period within the last ten

years, amounted to nearly one for every letter of the alphabet; and at one particular period of the year, were almost all open at the same time:

Astley's Amphitheatre.
Argyle Rooms—(Operas and French plays.)
Bermondsey Spa.
Bagnigge Wells.
Covent-Garden.
Cobourg Theatre.
Drury-Lane.
English Opera House.
French Theatre, Tottenham-street.
Haymarket.
Islington Spa—(New Vauxhall.)
King's Theatre.
Minor Theatre, Catherine-street.
New Vauxhall, at White Conduit Gardens.
Olympic Theatre.
Pantheon—(Operas, burlettas, &c.)
Royalty Theatre.
Surrey Theatre.
Sadler's Wells.
Tottenham-street, or West London Theatre.
Vauxhall Gardens.
Whitechapel Pavilion.

Besides evening concerts, oratorios, &c. &c. and what are termed regular private theatres in Tottenham-Court-Road, Berwick-street, Commercial-Road, John-street Wilmington-square,

Kennington, Regent-street, Wych-street, Temple-Bar, &c.—there are innumerable societies, (similar to the old club at the Jacob's Well, Barbican,) in almost every tenth street in the metropolis; all of which pretended private establishments do incalculable mischief to public morals, and the greatest injury to all regularity and respectability in an actor's profession, besides inundating the theatres with pretenders at low salaries, or who, according to a system lately introduced even in the Theatres Royal, (I will not here say by *whom* introduced,) are suffered to play *gratis* till they actually stand in need of that bread of which their probationary exertions are often depriving the families of respectable and fairly-established regular practitioners. I say nothing of musical pupils forced on the public for any one's real benefit but their own: the audience are disappointed, the theatre pays, the master profits, and the pupil toils. If the said pupils happen to succeed, the immense expense of a musical education is only to be repaid by the sacrifice of one-half of his or her theatrical appointments for years after success; and this success is so doubtful, that a prize in the lottery, though next to an impossible thing, is certainty compared to the chances of a singer.

To refresh the memories of those who have

toiled through the direct and cross roads, the "highways and by-ways" of my retrospections, —as well as to place a bird's-eye view of the whole before those who either disdain, or are too idle to peruse them at all, yet wish to be able to say that they have skimmed the surface at a glance; (or, as poor Mrs. Baker used to say, her acting manager studied his parts, by reading them "cursedly over;") I have made out a sort of *road-book sketch* of my whole journey or pilgrimage, and arranged it after the manner of "Paterson's Itinerary," carefully marking the distance of time between stage and stage, the inns we have baited at, and the remarkable objects on each side of the road to which our attention has been occasionally attracted. By consulting the following table, therefore, the distance from No. 5, Peter-street, Bloomsbury, in the state of infancy, to No. 5, Myddleton-square, in the district of senility, will amount to about fifty-five years, which are thus divided :—

Stages, &c.	*Yrs.*	*Total.*	*Objects on the Road.*	*Principal Inns, &c.*
From Infancy to the Shakspeare Jubilee.		4½	On the right Old Drury, Peter-street on the left.	Garrick's Head, Cradle and Hobby-horse.
Musical Tuition.	3½	8	St. Paul's Cathedral.	Gamut and Blackbird.
Cockney Education.	1	9	Half-farthing-lane.	The Whipped Syllabub.
Classic Discipline.	2	11	Barnard Castle.	Wheatsheaf and Thresher.
Trade and Commerce.	3	14	Moor-fields in front, Bedlam in the back-ground, and the Mansion-House in perspective.	Idle Apprentice.
Forbidden Fruit.	2	16	A cross road to the Royalty Theatre.	Palmer's Folly.
City Hostilities.	1½	17½	Public gate to Chamberlain's Office.	Wilkes and Liberty.
The Elopement.	½	18	By-road to Margate and Eastbourne; Mansion-House out of sight.	The Little Cherub
Mrs. Baker's Company.	½	18½	Direct road to Canterbury.	Good woman *with* a head.
Mr. Butler's Company.	½	19	To Beverley and Harrowgate.	Yorkshire Tyke.
Patent Promotion.	½	19½	To Liverpool and Manchester.	King's Arms.
Northern Excursions.	2½	22	To Edinburgh, Blasted Heath, and Macbeth's Castle.	The Bonnie Scotsman.
Provincial Authorship.	½	22½	Dangerous roads, by Critics' Corner, the Pit, Hissing-hall, and Beggar's Bush.	Philosopher's-stone.
Matrimony.	½	23	Collegiate Church in front, Union Gate on the right, to the Cottage of Content.	Hand in Hand.

Stages, &c.	*Yrs.*	*Total.*	*Objects on the Road.*	*Principal Inns, &c.*
London Authorship.	1	24	Sadler's Wells, by the Old Islington Stage.	The Hope.
Mouth of the Nile.	4	28	Old Covent-Garden, the Home, Hospitality-House.	Harris's Head. The Cornucopia. Bird in Hand.
First Five-Act Play.	6	34	Old Haymarket Theatre, through Liberality Lodge.	George the Second. Young King Cole.
Irish Speculation.	3	37	To Peter-street, Dublin.	The Bubble.
Minor Deputy Management.	2	39	Royal Circus: on the right, Betchworth Cottage.	Elliston Arms.
Patent Promptership.	2	41	New Drury-Lane Theatre.	Whitbread's Entire. The Bell and Whistle.
Demi-Deputy Management.	3	44	Committee-Room, to Rae's Corner; Surrey Theatre in the distance.	The Lamb. Moore's Head. Essex Arms. Kinnaird's Hobby. Byron's Joke.
The Lease.	1	45	Surrey Theatre in front, on the left King's Bench, on the right New Bedlam.	Ship in Distress.
Haymarket Management.	6	51	Little Theatre; Liberality on the left, road to Litigation.	King David.
Drury-Lane Stage-Management.	½	51½	Vinegar-yard *imperium in imperio*, road to Arbitration.	Lawyer and his Clients.
New Sadler's Wells.	2	53½	Islington New Town: Old roads.	The Anchor and Bee-hive.
Autobiography.	1½	55	Pleasant road to New Burlington-street.	The Adieu.

When Sir Lumley Skeffington brought out his comedy of "Lose no Time" at Drury-Lane, poor Maddocks played an old gardener in it with the elegantly-appropriate appellation of Ranunculus: I was then prompter; and as Maddocks constantly complained of not having a single joke in his part, I took the liberty of giving him one. Mrs. Edwin had to call out, "Ranunculus! where are you running to?"—"Running to seed, madam," replied the gardener, which, not being expected by the lady, set her off in a laugh, and had nearly brought me into disgrace with Sir Lumley. Lest, kind reader! you should begin to discover that I too am running the road of old Ranunculus, I shall only, prior to my concluding pages, entreat that you will not set me down as addicted to that never-to-be-sufficiently-deprecated disorder designated by the name of punning. You may just as well believe that I left an elegant supper the other night, when it blew a hurricane, in disgust at the above-named propensity in a friend, who desired his wife to throw a glass of peppermint out of window, because, as he said, it was "good for the wind." I was also equally indignant at the flippant receiver of tickets at Covent-Garden box door, who, seeing the late Sir John Turner enter wearing the badge of the *Ad Libitum*

Beef-Steak Club—(a gilt gridiron which Sir John had forgotten to take off) first asked whether he was a knight of St. Laurence, and then informed him that "no orders could possibly be admitted."

The year 1827 has been marked to me, as well as to thousands, with a very inauspicious commencement. It is with heart-felt sorrow I allude to the universally-lamented death of one of the most generous, liberal, and fostering patrons our stage was ever honoured with: it is scarcely necessary to name the late illustrious heir presumptive to the crown of the British empire. Scarcely any respectable theatrical individual but may be proud of some instance of princely condescension from His departed Royal Highness the Duke of York. About the year 1816, when the resources of the Drury-Lane Theatrical Fund had been for some time gradually and seriously diminishing, the personal patronage and splendid donations of His Royal Highness, added to the annual magnificent aid of His Gracious Majesty, claimed the heart-felt and respectful gratitude of the whole dramatic profession, as these truly royal benefits were equally extended to the sister theatre. At the first of these anniversary dinners, at which His Royal Highness did us the high honour of per-

sonally presiding, I, who was then a trustee of the Fund, was asked to write a song on the subject of our meeting; when the following was enthusiastically *encored* by His Royal Highness, from whom I had previously experienced many instances of most affable condescension, and who, after I had repeated the song, distinguished me by the honour of calling me to his table to take wine with him; and both then, and on our attending him to his carriage, thanked me for the amusement he was pleased to say he received from my ballad, which (as will be seen) was a double parody on the air and words of my father's song of "Jolly Dick the Lamplighter;" and is inserted, as claiming some degree of consideration from the warm expression of His Royal Highness's approval:—

SONG,

Written for the Anniversary of Drury-Lane Theatrical Fund.

Air—"*The Lamplighter.*"

In times not very long gone by,
You heard a bard with glee,
Whose lyre, howe'er I dare to try,
Will feebly sound from me:
Father and I, it plain appears,
Unequal powers display:
The difference is, he wrote for years,
And I write for to-day!

"The world 's a stage," as Shakspeare told;
We 're actors, and no more;
And many a Yorick now lies cold
Who made the table roar:
"Act well your part," the poet says;
"There all the honour lies:"
And he acts best who helps to raise
Fall'n genius ere it dies.

"The drama's laws," so Taste decrees,
"The drama's patrons give;"
And folks, 'tis said, "should live to please,
Who only please to live:"
Then think of those whose lives must be
Devoted still to you;
And who, while here you 're *sans souci*,
Perhaps are *sans six sous!*

Those ages dark, thank fate! are past,
Of buskins, masks, and socks,
When burly justices set fast
The wearers in the stocks;
And now a luckier Thespian set
This liberal room presents,
Who, if in any stocks they get,
'Tis in the Three per cents.

Yet some there are whom fate denies
To join these luckier ranks;
And many who deserve a prize,
Are doom'd to draw but blanks:
Then let us strive, as brethren should,
Their hapless lots to mend;
And those *not* brethren, be so good
As each to prove a friend.

"Some village" *Hamlet* want may bow,
Or turn *Othello* pale:
"Some mute inglorious" *Norval* now
May tell an humbler tale:
O'er *Richard's* woes a balm pray shed!
Let gold enrich the tear
To give *Jane Shore* a loaf of bread,
And furnish *Juliet's* bier.

May timely Prudence, heavenly maid!
Impart her cautious power,
And bid us seek a timely shade
Against a stormy hour!
And, patrons! ever blest be you,
Whose gifts our cares dispel,
Till prompter Time shall take his cue,
To ring life's curtain bell.

At the beginning of the evening, the health of Mr. Bannister had been given, who, on returning thanks, terminated a very neat speech by observing that the icy cloud which had so long hung over the interests of the Society was about to be dissolved; for, added he, emphatically,—

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by the sun of YORK.

Nor was an allusion from the late John Emery less rapturously received, at the anniversary of the Covent-Garden Fund, which playfully stated that the beneficence of our royal patron needed no other stimulus than to hear any sufferer exclaim—"*York! you 're wanted!*"

The latest dramatic, or rather minor dramatic

incident, I have to record respecting myself, is my having engaged Sadler's Wells Theatre of the proprietors for the holydays of Christmas, 1826-7. I began prosperously; when the above-mentioned disastrous death, at the commencement of the present year, occasioned a mournful pause in our performances. Willing to give *éclat* to my re-opening, I wrote to request the assistance of my old friend Sam Russell, so often mentioned from the commencement of these Memoirs; and, at their conclusion, to the honour of old and long-lived dramatic friendship, I am proud to say, he came purposely from Brighton to give me a night's aid gratuitously, thereby adding one to the numerous grateful instances of personal regard I have had the pride and pleasure to record.

If I have fatigued you, reader! I am very sorry: should I have, in any page, entertained you, I shall rejoice. Mine, in spite of good intention, has been a very chequered, and not a very fortunate life. I had occasion to write, a few days since, to a good fellow, who, moreover, is a dramatic writer much higher and more deservedly in public favour than ever I could hope to be; and I asked him, half jesting, half in earnest, why *he* has not written a "Life and Times," or a "Reminiscence," or an "Autobiography," to which he replied:—

"My dear Dibdin,

"Respecting my life, I can only say, that, had I money, I would give a great deal to keep it a profound secret, so thoroughly am I ashamed of it: it would be as worthless in the market, as its retrospect is humiliating to,

"Dear Dibdin, &c. &c.

"* * * * *"

I once heard a bumpkin, in Mrs. Baker's company, when acting Charles in "The School for Scandal," say,—"If 'um says this to Morility, what 'll 'um say to me by' m by?" For myself, (not at all giving credit to my friend's hypothetically pictured life,) I have written the best account of myself I could, and I have written it truly. I wish, for your sakes, my friends and enemies! (if I really have either) it had been fuller of incident, and more entertaining; and I wish, for my own sake, it had been more free from (unintentional) mistake, and more productive of worldly mammon;—not for myself, but for those of my fire-side who, after all, really do make it, under all circumstances, a downright pretty considerable good sort of a life enough; such, in short, as any very domestically-inclined scribbler could wish to describe in the most effective dramatic family *tableau* that ever was exhibited.

Were my capabilities equal to my will, I would now make my *congé* with a bow so graceful, that

it should be hereafter said of me, as of the rebellious Thane of Cawdor,—

> Nothing *in* his life
> Became him like the leaving it.

And perhaps the crustiest critic could not say any thing more severe. I shall, therefore, once more shelter my fading leaves under the evergreen protection of my father's laurel; and as I began this relation with my obligations to "Poor Jack," I shall conclude it, out of respect to its author, with a farewell tribute to his natural and patriotic Muse, which (being one of the last of my own lyric attempts) I wrote for the meeting of those liberal friends to his memory, who assembled to subscribe towards a monument, in itself much less honourable to the poet, than the assemblage of rank, talent, and respectability, found among the contributors to its erection:—

The Bard of Poor Jack.

One sigh for the bard, by philanthropy fired,
Who ne'er wrote but some truth to impart;
Whose Muse, while portraying what Nature inspired,
Brought every touch home to the heart.
On his plain honest lay, fools would censure intrude,*
Forgetting the theme of his song
Was "The Heart of a Tar," or "The Billows so rude
Which bore his trim vessel along."

* A critique in a work of first-rate estimation censured the style of my father's sea songs, as *vulgar*.

But grumblers can seldom achieve aught beyond
 The false taste which directs their attack;
And, till pedants can rail Nature's "seal from his bond,"
 They 'll ne'er injure the bard of "Poor Jack."

Ye fair ones, who love the bold sons of true blue!
 Your hearts will be ever allied
To him, who ne'er yet breathed a line but which you
 Might approve; and this fact was his pride.
His harp's speaking melody ne'er own'd a strain
 Which could poison convey to the ear;
Make semblance of pleasure a passport to pain;
 Or, "cause ruin'd beauty a tear."
If mirth, with sound morals commingled, may claim
 Recollection, his Muse ne'er will lack
The wreath of true genius, which justly-earn'd Fame
 Shall entwine for the bard of "Poor Jack."

Ye tars of our island! what Saturday night,—
 Though waves roll, and weather blow hard,—
Shall call you to toast her in whom you delight,
 Without some pensive thought of the bard?
While the can circles gaily, give one manly sigh
 To him who recorded your worth;
And who, though "gone aloft," will with you never die,
 But in each seaman's heart find a berth.
And you, brother Britons! met nobly to-day
 With applause his past merits to back,
With delight will oft think of each patriot lay
 Which "Poor Charles" sang to solace "Poor Jack."

INDEX.

A.

Aberdeen, the Old and New Town, i. 137
Actors, -preliminaries and punctilios of the dramatic corps, i. 227. 323, 324; anecdotes of some eminent actors, 14. 18. 36. 386
Aikin, Mr. Frank, the author's godfather, i. 10; their subsequent meeting, 112. 125
Alexandre, Monsieur, ii. 259
Andrews, Mr. i. 106
Anecdotes, i. 218. 226. 244. 253. 259, 260. 275. 284. 418. (a Tale of a *Tub*), 427. ii. 121. 333. 362. 374. 376. 388, 389. 392, 393. 400
Applications for theatrical engagements, *humorous or curious*, ii. 117, 118. 120. 122. 125
Arnold, Dr. i. 187
Arnold, Mr. i. 186, 187. ii. 2, 3. 19. 22. 24. 33. 43, 44. 51. 67. 285
Ashe, Dr. Hoadley, ii. 361, 362. anecdote, 363
Astley, Philip, i. 170, 171. 192, 193
Attwood, Mr. *composer*, i. 228. 289. 313. 326

B.

Baillie, Miss Joanna, ii. 136
Baker, Mr. M.P. i. 205, 206
Baker, Mrs. i. 91. 93; description of, 93; her family, 96, 97. her epitaph, 99. 102. 196. 203. 221; her management, 223, 224. 226; her riches, 225. 286. ii. 282. 406
Baker, Miss, *actress*, i. 98
Baker, Tom, i. 57
Ball, extraordinary, held at the Golden Lane Brewery, i. 427
Bamff, the author's peregrination to, i. 138, 139
Banks, Mr. i. 118. 171
Bannister, Mr. i. 267, 268. ii. 8. 45. 79. 318, 319. 404
Bannister, Charles, i. 384. 389
Banquo's Pillar on the road to Inverness, i. 147
Barnes. Mr. ii. 82
Barret, Mr. i. 120
Barrymore, Mr. W. ii. 252
Bartley, Mrs. ii. 8
Bates, Mr. ii. 392, 393
Bates, Mr. W. i. 111
Beef-steak Club, Covent Garden Theatrical, i. 254. 353; its members, 353. ii. 400
Bell, Mr. i. 158
Belmont, villa of Mr. T. Harris, and statues in its gardens, ii. 355
Bengough, Mr. ii. 182
Betty, Master, i. 386
Beverley, performances at, i. 107
Bianchi, Signor, i. 315

Bicknell, Mr. Charles, i. 215
Billington, Mrs. i. 110. 307. 328. ii. 128
Blanchard, Mr. i. 280
Boaden, Mr., his Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons, i. 401. ii. 147
Bolla, Madame, ii. 375, 376
Booth, Mr. *theatrical proprietor*, i. 40. 50
Bowden, Mr. i. 119. 175
Braham, Mr. i. 307. 311. 316, 317. 368. ii. 141
Brandon, Mr. i. 216, 217. 243. ii. 157
Breakfast, Scottish, i. 138. 146
Brighton, visit to, i. 88
Bristow, Mr. i. 205
Brooks, John, *an amateur salamander*, ii. 390
Brougham, Henry, M.P. ii. 325
Bruce's Travels in Abyssinia, ii. 235
Brunton, Mr. i. 280. 389
Bull, John, *characteristic editor*, ii. 321
Bullock, Mr. ii. 195
Bunn, Mr. ii. 301, 302
Bunn, Mrs. ii. 192. 301
Burgess, Sir James Bland, ii. 182
Burroughs, Mr. Watkyns, ii. 213
Butler, Mr. i. 107
Button's Coffee-house, (see *Spectator*) ii. 16
Byrne, Mr. *ballet-master*, ii. 115
Byron, Lord, ii. 57. 59. 65. 69

C.

Campbell, *poet*, ii. 357, 358
Campden, Mr. i. 99. 103. 106
Canning, Mr. ii. 297, 298. 306, 307

Canterbury, theatre at, i. 106
Caroline, Her Majesty Queen, ii. 201, 202. 206
Charlotte of Wales, H. R. H. the Princess, ii. 92, 93
Chatterley, Mrs. ii. 179
Cherry, Mr., his dramas, i. 402. ii. 2
Chichester, earl of, ii. 336
Choir of St. Paul's cathedral, i. 17
Clagget, Mr. Charles, i. 116
Clark, Mr. i. 18
Classon, Mr. ii. 307
Clifford, Mrs. i. 212. 246
Club, *Keep the Line*, i. 358
Cobb, Mr. i. 235. 243
Cobourg Theatre, ii. 209, 210
Cochrane, Lord, i. 129
Coleridge, Mr. i. 72
Coleridge, Mr. *dramatist*, ii. 8
Colman, Mr. i. 147. 191. 251. 350. 366. 368. 370. 372. 388. 394, 395. 435. ii. 9. 234. 263, 264. 285
Compliments paid by reviewers are critically ambiguous, ii. 6
Connor, Mr. *comedian*, ii. 370
Conroy, Captain, ii. 269
Const, Mr. i. 254. 259. 293. 355. 363. 374. ii. 309
Cooke, George, i. 119; anecdotes respecting him, 120, 121. 152. 166. 255. 280, 281. 283, 284, 285, 286, 287. 328. ii. 29, 30. 379
Cooke, Mr. T. ii. 69
Cooper, Mr. H. ii. 298, 299
Copeland, Miss, ii. 174. 207
Copyrights, i. 239, 240. 253
Cordy, Mr. ii. 173
Coronation, the, ii. 203; supper at the Surrey Theatre after the play, 204

Corri, *musical composer*, i. 316, 317
Covent-Garden Theatre, its destruction by fire, i. 420, 421; the O. P. riot, 421
Crouch, Mrs. i. 118. ii. 375. 381
Cruikshank, Mr. ii. 214
Cumberland, Mr. i. 207. 210. 218, 219. 274, 275. 394. 444
Cundee, Mr. ii. 309

D.

Damer, Hon. Mrs. i. 14
Davy, Mr. *composer*, i. 316, 317
Davy, Mr. John, i. 189
Deal, engagement to play at, i. 102. 105
Debating club in Capel-court, i. 40
Defoe, moral inculcated by this ingenious novelist, i. 8
Delpini's *Scaramouch*, i. 39. 400
Dibdin, Charles, the celebrated, i. 10. 16; his songs, 48. 69. 207. 247. 398. ii. 35. 108; his son Thomas's poetical tribute to his memory, 407, 408
Dibdin.—The author dares the critics, i. 5; his ancestors settled at Dibden, near Southampton, 9; his birth-day, 10; his early impressions in reading Goldsmith's England, 11; he is placed in the choir of St. Paul's, 17; his care of a blackbird, 18; his schooling, 19; his adventure on the Trent, 20; he is apprenticed to Sir William Rawlins, 21; his theatre and dramatic composition when at school in the county of Durham, 23; theatre constructed by him when an apprentice, with the catastrophe, 29; he applies to John Wilkes, then chamberlain, 30. 32; he requests Mr. Booth to hear him read a part, 40; he leaves his apprenticeship, on a theatrical trip to Margate, 43; he sings

with marked success on board the hoy, 47, 48; his first engagement with the Dover company of players, 52. 58. 80; peril at Margate, 59; reflections on the consequences of his rash undertaking, 61. 63; his *début* at Eastbourne, 69. 72; his *nom de guerre*, (Mr. Merchant,) 70; adventure at his lodgings, 76; his own songs, 81; his scene-painting, 83. 105; he is constrained to drink and travel with smugglers, 87; his engagement at Liverpool, with the addition of painting the scenes, 112; adventures on his journey to Bamff, 132. 140; he sails from Inverness to Newcastle, 154; his versatile talents, 162; his marriage, 166. 169; he proceeds to London to try his success as a dramatist, 183; his colloquy with Philip Astley, 198; engagement formed with the Canterbury Theatre, 203; his success as a dramatist, 216; his intrepidity, in his Battle of the Nile, 219, 220; he passes the fiery ordeal of the green-room, 228. 230; called on to perform at Covent-Garden at an hour's notice, 232, 233; his engagement in consequence on the London boards, 234; he becomes a proprietor of Sadler's Wells, 306. 357. 371; he offends the Jews of London by a song: serious uproar, 337. 341, 342; his dramatic success, 364. 368; his speculation in Dublin, 398; popularity of his pantomimes, 401. 430; he concludes his engagement with Mr. Harris, and retires to Betchworth, 431, 432; his poetry, 433; he engages with Mr. Elliston, as author and manager of the Surrey Theatre, 434; birth of his son, 434; his engagement at Drury-Lane Theatre as prompter, ii. 3; his "Metrical History of England," 5, 6; he gives a hint as to his affability when a manager, 11. 217; he edits *Dibdin's London Theatre*, 38; he is appointed manager of Drury-Lane, 52; he becomes lessee of the Surrey Theatre, 93. 109, 110; his proposal for becoming a lessee of Drury-Lane, 166;

his social virtues, when lessee of the Surrey Theatre, 205; he gives up his interest in this theatre, 213; his pecuniary misfortunes, 216. 228; hearty letter by the *corps dramatique* in approbation of Mr. Dibdin, 222; his law-suit, 279. 298; his difference with Mr. Morris, 279, 280. 295. 325; he is arrested, 288; his school for the English drama, 313; he is again manager of Sadler's Wells, 316. 332. 334; he acts in a play after a lapse of years, 320; reflections on his Autobiography, and the chequered existence which it describes, 326, 327, 328; his humorous retrospection of his foregone years, 398, 399; conclusion of these Memoirs, 405; verses to the lyric genius of his father, 407, 408

Dibdin, Mr. Thomas, the author's dramatic and other works. Botany Bay, i. 114; Sunshine after Rain, 119. 175; Death of David Rizzio, 129; Rival Loyalists, 180; St. David's Day, 183. 266; The Village Ghost, 186; Pennyworth of Wit, 189; John of Calais, 190; Austrian Hussar, 191; Il Bondocani, 191. 289; Various Songs, 192, 193. 202. 207; Valentine and Orson, 206; Songs, 208; The Jew and the Doctor, 211; its success, 216; The Mouth of the Nile, 220, 221. 234, 235; The Horse and Widow, 239; Five Thousand a Year, 239; The Birth-day, 206. 239; Tag in Tribulation, 249; Of Age To-morrow, 252. 268; Songs, 252, 253; Naval Pillar, 261. 264; Hermione, 267; Liberal Opinions, 267; The School for Prejudice, 267. 294; Something New, 301. 304; The Cabinet, 253. 308, 309. 314. 316; Zuma, 324; Address, 329. 334; Family Quarrels, 337. 343; Parody, 349; Songs written for Incledon, 356; The Box-Office, 359; English Fleet in 1342, 362; The Will for the Deed, 206. 363; Guilty or not Guilty, 368; Thirty

Thousand, or Who 's the richest? 387; Songs, 389, 390; The White Plume, 394; Five Miles Off, or the Finger-Post, 311. 394; The Miseries of Human Life, 402; Errors Excepted, 411; Princess and No Princess, 420, 421; The Jubilee, 429; Melodrames, Pantomimes, &c. for the Surrey Theatre, 434, 435. 438; Up to Town, 437; his Irish Songs, 445; Who 's to Have her? ii. 19; Orange Boven, 23, 24; The Two Farmers, 25; Harlequin Hoax, 34; Past Ten o'Clock, 44; Twenty per Cent. 72; What Next? 91; Pitcairn's Island, 91; his dramatic productions at the Surrey Theatre, 132. 134, 135. 139. 151, 152. 176, 177. 179. 188. 193. 198. 207; Zuma, 140; How to write an Opera, 148; The Lily of St. Leonard's, or The Heart of Mid Lothian, 156. 175; The Ruffian Boy, 170; Stop Thief, 183; Rise and Fall, 186. 194; Kenilworth, 190, 191. 301. 305; The Three Blue Barons, 192; his plays written for the Haymarket, 233; Love Letters, 233; Morning, Noon, and Night, 237; Old Nick, 259; King Charles the Second, 262; The Vicar of Wakefield, 264; various dramas, 276, 277; his dramatic interludes for Sadler's Wells, 316, 317. 320. *See* ii. 340—349

Dibdin, Mrs. i. 107, 108. 165, 166. 178, 179, 180. 186. 203, 204. 256, 257. 278. 282. 286. 429. 434. 436. ii. 3. 9. 44. 132. 215. 288, 289, 290. 300. 363

Dibdin, Mrs. the author's mother, i. 10; comic characters performed by her, ii. 31; visited by her son, 85. 88. 114. 122. 167. 181. 188. 241. 264, 265. 401; her death, 36

Dibdin, Mr. son of the author, i. 434; ii. 240. 336, 337

Dibdin, Mr. Charles J. M. i. 11. 14. 333; his dramatic writings, 92; his poems, 185. 358; his plays, ii. 76. 315. 323

Dibdin, Mrs. Charles, ii. 132

Dibdin, Rev. Thomas Frognall, i. 11
Dibdin, Thomas, captain of a merchant vessel, i. 11
Dickons, Mrs. i. 411, 412
Digges, Mr. i. 131
Dighton, Mr. Robert, i. 181. 185. 252
Dimond, Mr. i. 334. ii. 301. 334
Drury-Lane Theatre burnt, i. 427, 428; account of receipts and expenditure at this theatre in a season, ii. 101, 102
Dunbar, Sir Archibald, i. 146
Dundonald, Earl of, i. 129
Dunn, Mr. ii. 247. 273, 274
Dogs, that saved Sadler's Wells Theatre, when about to sink, ii. 333
Dover, the author arrives at, i. 64
Dowton, Mr. i. 98. 209. 211. 357. ii. 66

E.

Eastbourne, arrival at, i. 65; the theatre of, 73, 74. 86
Ebsworth, Mr. ii. 262. 266
Edinburgh, tour to, i. 127, 128
Edwin, *comic actor*, i. 36. 107
Edwin, Mrs. i. 57. ii. 24. 400
Egerton, Mrs. ii. 156. 170
Eldon, Lord, his scenic readings, ii. 43
Elliston, Mr. i. 269, 270. 334, 335. 433. 439. ii. 5. 7. 109. 166. 189. 236. 241. 244. 250. 256. 259. 275. 301. 324
Elliston, Mrs. ii. 190
Emery, John, i. 236. 243. 255. 380
Emoluments, the author's, at Covent-Garden, i. 241. 277. 295. 327. 364. 368. 392; at the Surrey Theatre, 433
Erskine, Lord, ii. 307

Erskine, Lord Chancellor, i. 212
Erskine, Mr. J. ii. 157. 197. 265. 307. 314, 315
Essex, Earl of, i. 15. ii. 57, 58, 59. 74. 77. 241
Evance, Mr. ii. 152, 153. 158
Evance, Mrs. ii. 148

F.

Farley, Mr. i. 228. 236. 239. 389. 396. 401. 419
Fawcett, Mr. John, i. 105. 228. 230. 236. 238. 290. 327. 339. 344. 350. 441
Fielding, loyalty of Mr. Dibdin to the authority of Henry, ii. 369
Fife, Earl of, his mansion near Bamff, i. 139. 143, 144
Finlater, Countess of, i. 143. 146. 158
Fisher, Mr. i. 82. 84
Fisher, Miss Clara, i. 83
Fitzgerald, Mr. i. 66. 86
Fitzwilliam, Mr. ii. 151. 203. 207
Fontenelle, Miss, i. 89
Foulkes, Evan, Esq. M. P. i. 390
Fox, Mr. i. 74
Frazer of Lovat, i. 145
Freeling, Mr. ii. 336

G.

Galland, Mr. i. 19; the author's studies at this gentleman's school, 20
Gardner, Mr. i. 91. 96, 97, 98

Garrick, David, godfather of the author, i. 10. 12; his kindness to children, 13; his offer to West, 14; his letter on Hamlet, 16
Garrick, Mrs. i. 13. ii. 30, 31; compliment she paid to Mr. Kean, 32, 33
George, Fort, i. 148
George the Third, i. 234. 238. 244. 277. ii. 180
George the Fourth, His Majesty, i. 428
Gloucester, H. R. H. the Duchess of, i. 268. 270
Glover, Mrs. ii. 212
Gog and Magog, a pantomime, ii. 243. 245. 249. 252
Goodwin, Mr. i. 319
Green-room, the, at Covent-Garden, i. 227
Greenwood, Mr. i. 197; his letters, 197. 200
Griffith, Mr. i. 118
Grignion, Mr. ii. 17
Grimaldi, Joseph, i. 399, 400. ii. 78. 316. 335

H.

Hamilton, Mr. i. 115. 141
Hamilton, Mrs. i. 142
Harper, Mr. *actor*, i. 67. 69. 90
Harris, Mr. of the Theatre Royal Covent-Garden, i. 217, 218, 219, 220. 231. 237, 238. 244. 263. 266. 288. 295. 298. 312. 328. 341. 364. 392. 404. 434. 436. 441. ii. 3. 5. 140. 143. 186. 188. 326. 353
Harris, Mr. Henry, i. 415. 420
Harris, Captain, i. 440
Harrowgate, its inns and innkeepers, i. 109
Haymarket, Theatre Royal, i. 371. 373

Hawes, Mr. ii. 309, 310. 313
Hawley, Sir Henry and Lady, i. 205. 246. 331, 332
Henderson, Mr. i. 260, 261
Hewetson, Captain, i. 416
Hilliar, Miss, (Mrs. Dibdin) i. 107
Hoare, Sir Richard Colt, ii. 363, 364. 366; his gardener, 364, 365
Hoare, Mr. Prince, i. 311
Hobhouse, Sir Benjamin, i. 353, 354
Holcroft, Mr. *dramatic author*, i. 243, 247; his Memoirs referred to, 248. 336. 348
Holman, Mr. i. 85
Honeyman, Mr. ii. 314, 315. 323, 324
Horn, Mr. i. 242. 413
Hudson, Mr. i. 17
Hudson, Miss, i. 17
Hughes, Mr. i. 251. ii. 316
Hughes, Mr. *proprietor of Sadler's Wells*, i. 185
Hull, Mr. i. 417, 418
Huntley, Mr. ii. 209, 210

I.

Imlach, Baillie, of Bamff, i. 143
Inchbald, Mrs. i. 262. 387
Incledon, Charles, i. 71. 228, 229, 230. 253. 277. 293. 356. 413. ii. 35. 126. 380
Inverness, tour to, i. 148. 153
Ireland, Mr. *musician*, i. 99
Irish character, ripe for the drama, i. 426
Irish Widow, The, a farce, by Garrick, i. 16

Jackson, Mr. of Aberdeen, i. 138
Jerrold, Mr. i. 68, 69
Johnson, Miss, ii. 70
Johnston, Mr. Henry, ii. 376, 377
Johnstone, Mr. John, i. 228. 230. 251, 252. 255. 277. 389. ii. 93
Jones, Mr. i. 110. 115. 124. 138. 141. 164
Jones, Mrs. i. 110. ii. 264
Jones, Mr. of Sadler's Wells, ii. 336
Jones, Mr. of Covent-Garden Theatre, ii. 195
Jordan, Mrs. i. 108. 296. ii. 8

K.

Kean, Mr. i. 396. ii. 26, 27. 29, 30. 86. 103. 115. 258
Kelly, Michael, a few more reminiscences of, i. 118. ii. 371, 372, 373, 374. 376. 378. 380; Dibdin's epitaph for Kelly, 381
Kelly, Miss, ii. 90
Kemble, John P. i. 197. 296. 381. 400. ii. 34. 328, 329, 330. 352. 354, 355, 356. 359. 375. 378
Kemble, Mr. Charles, i. 416. ii. 235. 308
Kemble, Mrs. Charles, i. 416
Kemble, Mr. Stephen, ii. 15, 16. 235
Kemble, Mrs. Stephen, i. 260
Kenny, Mr. his plays, i. 360. 387. ii. 265
Kent, their R. H. the Duke and Duchess of, ii. 149, 150. 177. 180. 268
King, Mr. his retirement, i. 357
Kinnaird, Hon. Douglas, ii. 52. 57. 59. 61. 76. 283, 284
Kirby, Mr. *Clown*, ii. 44

Knight, Mr. i. 236. 247. 249
Kotzebue's dramas, i. 239

L.

Lamb, Hon. George, ii. 57. 59, 60, 61. 70. 78
Larpent, Mr. ii. 23. 25
Lee, Mr. innkeeper at Edinburgh, i. 128. 130. 132. 135. 158
Leeds, Duke of, i. 207. 209. 218. 234. 236. 239. 253, 254
Letters of Mr. Thomas Dibdin, i. 242
Lewes, Mr. Lee, i. 107. 114. 128. 352
Lewis, Mr. *stage-manager*, i. 227, 228. 232. 238, 239. 263. 275, 276. 295. 297. 341. 351. 364. 414. 417. 428; his death, 444
Lewis, Mrs. ii. 382
Lewis, M. G. his dramatic works, i. 328. 392
Limerick gloves, i. 330
Liston, Mr. i. 133. ii. 237. 276, 277
Liston, Mrs. i. 394
Litchfield, Mr. ii. 79, 80
Literary Fund Club, i. 253. 353, 354
Liverpool, the author's engagement at, i. 110. 112
Long, a theatrical prompter, i. 98
Lonsdale, Mr. Mark, i. 186. 190. 196. 201. 208. 233. 422. ii. 36; humorous account of him, 37. 40, 41
Lottery, the, ii. 391, 392, 393
Lushington, Mrs. i. 71

M.

Macbeth's Castle, description of, i. 149. 151
Macklin, Mr. i. 285

Management, theatrical, i. 95, 96. 193. 223, 224. 226
Manchester, antiquarian description of its theatre, i. 117; the Circus near Ardwick-Green, 162. 169
Mannan, Mr. his eccentric opinions, i. 127, 128
Margate hoy, i. 45. 48
Margate, theatre at, i. 40. 57. 59
Martin, Mr. an Irish prompter, i. 108
Martin, Mr. *Lottery Office*, illusion and stage-effect, ii. 391, 392
Masterman, Mr. i. 177. 182. 195
Mate, Mr. theatrical manager, i. 51. 56. 58
Mate, Mrs. i. 64
Mathews, Mr. ii. 377
Mattocks, Mrs. i. 236, 237. 269. 271. 273. 416
Maturin, Rev. Mr. ii. 92
Millington, Mr. i. 224
Mills, Master, i. 13
Milman, Mr. his tragedy of Fazio, ii. 134, 135
Montague, Lord Frederick, ii. 337
Moody, Mr. i. 257, 258
Moore, Mr. P., M. P. ii. 57, 58. 64. 98
Moorhead, Mr. John, i. 167. 189, 190. 264. 289. 314. 317, 318. 320. 322
Morris, Mr. of the Haymarket Theatre, ii. 215, 216. 234, 235. 264. 266. 273. 276. 278. 288. 290. 315. 325
Morris, Mr. *painter*, ii. 195
Morris, Mr. i. 412
Morton, Mr. *dramatist*, i. 275. 294. 306. 311. 381. 387
Mountain, Mrs. ii. 182
Munden, Mr. i. 109. 234. 261. 277. 290. ii. 44. 66
Murray, Mr. ii. 200, 201
Murray, Miss, ii. 91
Murray, Mr. *actor*, i. 233. 240

N.

Nash, Miss, ii. 70
Nasmyth, Mr. ii. 243
Newton, Mr. *a pompous actor*, i. 225
Nixon, Mr. J. i. 358
Norfolk, Duke of, i. 212
Norman, Mr. his ferocity, i. 104

O.

O'Connor, Mr. Arthur, i. 212, 213, 214
O'Keeffe's dramatic works, i. 72. 191. 211. 289
O'Leary, Rev. Father, i. 258
O. P. Row, i. 421

P.

Palmer, Mr. John, i. 26. 292, 293
Palmer, Mr. Robert, ii. 47
Pantomimes; the author fatigued by the constant composition of them, endeavours to close the list of his productions of this nature by Harlequin Magnet; subsequently, however, Mother Goose is elicited from him, i. 396, 397, 398; its unprecedented success, 401. 413. 429; The High-mettled Racer, ii. 2. 7
Parker, Mr. i. 131. 170
Parker, Mrs. *Columbine*, i. 170
Parker, Capt. J. ii. 178. 269

Parry, Mr. *composer*, ii. 158. 161. 235
Parsons, Mr. i. 67
Patch, murder done by him, i. 355, 356
Paton, Miss, ii. 238. 276
Paulo, *Clown*, ii. 244. 246
Payne, Mr. Howard, ii. 264
Penley, Mr. ii. 86
Peterhead, harbour of, i. 157
Phillips, Mr. ii. 19. 22
Pitt, family of this name the maternal parentage of the author, i. 9
Pitt, Mrs. A. grandmother of the author, i. 122. 124. 147. 241
Pitt, Cecil, Esq. i. 21. 24. 333. 431
Pitt, Mr. Cecil, half-brother of the author, i. 43. 50. 56. 61. 92. 115. 117. 124. 162. 172, 173, 174. 278. 333. 369. ii. 115. 181
Pitt, Miss Mary, i. 278
Plays, &c. composed by Mr. Thomas Dibdin; catalogue of his dramatic productions, ii. 338, 339, 340 to 349
Plays: interesting particulars relative to various dramas,—Douglas, i. 75. Werter, 85. Cymon, 122
Play-bills, various, i. 296, 297. 337; *extraordinary*, ii. 383, 384
Plumptre, Rev. James, ii. 385
Poetic effusions by Mr. T. Dibdin, ii. 363. 368. 381. 402. 407
Poole, Mr. ii. 33. 76
Pope, Mr. i. 256
Pope, Miss, i. 257
Porson, Professor, *his literal mistake*, i. 323
Porter, Miss, i. 352

Powell, Mr. Sparks, i. 232
Powell, Mrs. Katherine, i. 411
Powell, Mr. W. i. 113, 114. 188
Powell, Mrs. i. 114. 233
Prince, Rev. Mr. ii. 6
Prompter, duties of this office, ii. 9, 10, 11. 14
Pugh, Mr. i. 112
Pyne, Mr. ii. 20

Q.

Quakers, brought as characters upon the stage, i. 262, 263
Quick, Mr. i. 269, 270
Quin, i. 15

R.

Rae, Mr. ii. 8. 53, 54. 66. 92
Ranking, Mr. G. i. 405. ii. 367
Rawlins, Sir William, i. 21; his inconsistencies, 21; his prediction respecting the author, 24; his severity, 29. 31. 33. 36. 54, 55. 88. 136. 188; his civility, 246, 247. 406. 430. ii. 171
Rawlins, Mrs. Pleasant, i. 22
Raymond, Mr. I. G. i. 442, 443, ii. 106. 181
Read, Isaac, i. 293
Reeve, *composer*, i. 317. 394. ii. 315
Renaud, Mrs. i. 114
Retail venders of music in the theatres, i. 327

Reynolds, Mr. his plays, i. 85. 122. 274. 294. 336. 358. 360. 378. 393. 429. ii. 82
Reynolds, Mrs. i. 237
Richards, Mr. John, i. 11
Richland, Mr. i. 52. 67, 68. 90, 91
Rigby, Mr. i. 18
Robson, Mr. manager of the Margate Theatre, i. 50
Rochefoucault, De la, i. 6
Rorauer, Mr. ii. 220, 221
Royalty Theatre, the, i. 27. 36. 39. ii. 394
Russell, Mr. the Brighton manager, i. 67. 72. 90. 106. 294. 331. ii. 52. 190. 405

S.

Sadler's Wells, i. 185 ; the author conducts this theatre anew, ii. 316 ; reflections on its improved position, by the advance of the town to this ancient site of merriment, 321, 322. 405
Sandwich, town of, i. 106
Saunderson, Mr. *composer*, ii. 170
Scene-painting, i. 52. 82. 103. 105. ii. 116
School for the English drama, ii. 313
Scotland, Mr. Dibdin's expedition into, i. 126. 141. 155 ; farewell to Scotland, 159, 160
Scottish travelling companion, i. 65. 73. 75, 76. 90
Sea-passage from Edinburgh to Aberdeen, description of unusual adventures, i. 131. 134 ; to Newcastle, 155
Shakspeare's Jubilee in 1775, i. 12 ; quotation from, 310
Sheridan, Mr. *actor*, father of Richard Brinsley, i. 259

Sheridan, Mr. i. 212. ii. 83, 84. 387
Sheridan, Mr. T. ii. 8. 85
Shield, *composer*, i. 315. 412. ii. 35
Siddons, Mrs. i. 10. 12. ii. 8. 375
Siddons, Mr. Henry, i. 325
Siddons, Mrs. H. ii. 165
Skeffington, Sir Lumley, i. 327, 422. ii. 400
Smart, Sir George, ii. 87
Smith, Mr. i. 99
Smugglers, i. 75, 76. 86, 87
Snug Little Island, song of the, i. 208, 209
Soane, Mr. ii. 251
Somersetshire gardener and the poet, a dialogue, ii. 364
Somerville, Miss, ii. 92
St. Augustine's Gate at Canterbury, i. 107
Stahremberg, Prince, i. 207. 245
Stanton, Mr. i. 172. 176
Staples, Justice, i. 28
State Trials, i. 212, 213, 214
Stephens, Miss, ii. 257
Stonehaven, town of, i. 135
Storace, Signora, i. 311. 324. 417. ii. 129
Storm at sea, i. 156
Surrey Theatre, the author becomes the lessee of the, ii. 93. 107. 110. 113. 133. 147. 188. 213, 214

T.

Talma, his visit to Mr. Dibdin, ii. 136. 138. 356. 358. 387, 388
Tayleure, Mr. i. [illegible]

Taylor, Miss, ii. 157. 208
Terry, Mr. ii. 80. 195. 322
Theatre, a juvenile one constructed by the author, i. 26
Theatres, list of the London, ii. 395
Theatrical personifications; anecdotes respecting the original performers and other actors of particular characters,— Mungo, i. 11. 111; Horatius, 15; Glenalvon, 75; Werter, 85; Dozey, 44; Captain Bertram, 44
Thompson, Doctor, i. 205
Thomson, Mr. Benjamin, his dramatic productions, i. 242. 278. 419. ii. 19. 93
Times Newspaper, the, ii. 205
Townsend, the officer, anecdote of, i. 386
Townsend, Mr. i. 299. 301. 303, 304. 306
Trott, *Governor*, so denominated, i. 105
Turner, Sir John, ii. 400, 401

V.

Vestris, Madame, ii. 234, 235. 262
Villars, Mr. i. 67

W.

Waddy, Mr. i. 348
Wakelin, Miss, i. 94, 95. 103
Wales, journey into, i. 177, 178, 179
Wallis, Miss, i. 108, 109
Ward, Mr. i. 110. 171. ii. 83. 166
Ward, Mrs. i. 113

Warren, Mr. ii. 52. 103
Waterer, *Farmer*, i. 435
Waylett, Mrs. i. 73
Webb, Mrs. i. 111
Webster, Sir Godfrey, remarkable picture painted by Wilkin for his seat, Battle Abbey, ii. 179
Wellington, Duke of, ii. 185
Welsh, Mr. T. ii. 309, 310
West, Mr. his foresight respecting Garrick's offer of lying in the painter's *atelier*, i. 14
West, Mr. ii. 109
Whiskey-punch in Scotland, i. 135
Whitbread, Mr. Samuel, M. P. ii. 11. 19. 21. 46; private theatre, 382, 383
Whitlock, Mrs. (sister of Mrs. Siddons) i. 118
Wignell, Mr. i. 114
Wild, Mr. James, *prompter*, i. 86. 88. 264. 291
Wilkes, John, his administration of justice, i. 30. 32. 34. ii. 173
Williams, Mr. ii. 295. 297
Williams, Mr. *comedian*, ii. 331
Wilson, Mr. *comedian*, i. 20
Wilson, Mr. James, *surgeon*, ii. 372, 373, 374
Windsor, Mrs. i. 119. 166. 282. ii. 388
Winston, Mr. i. 372. 377. ii. 247. 253. 255. 266. 273. 281
Wrench, Mrs. i. 111
Wright, Mr. i. 107
Wright, Mrs. i. 107
Wright, Mr. Smith, i. 278
Wroughton, Mr. ii. 81

Y.

Yates, Mr. ii. 322
Young, Mr. ii. 257. 357, 358
Young, Mr. John, ii. 35
York, H. R. H. the Duke of, ii. 401, 402. 404
Yorke, Sir Joseph, ii. 35

THE END.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.